

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1893, by Frank Tousey.

No. 262.

NEW YORK, JUNE 10, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS • ELECTRIC • TORPEDO RAM; OR, THE SUNKEN CITY OF THE ATLANTIC.

By "NONAME."



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Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, November 7, 1898. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1903, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, 24 Union Square, New York.

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NEW YORK, JUNE 10, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

Jack Wright and His Electric Torpedo Ram

OR,

The Sunken City of the Atlantic.

By "NONAME."

J. J. MILLER,
DEALER IN CIGARS & TOBACCO
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CHAPTER I.

THE BOY, THE BOAT AND HIS FRIENDS.

Not many years ago, the metropolitan newspapers began to publish accounts of the attacks of a peculiar-looking craft upon different vessels crossing the Atlantic, without any provocation.

The object of this hostility was not apparent; as vessels of all nationalities suffered alike, no apparent attempt at piracy was reported as being made upon them, and the aggressive vessel was never encountered in the same place twice.

According to different reports, the boundaries of these attacks were between the parallels of 20 and 35 degrees north, and between the meridians of 30 and 60 degrees west.

Embraced within the area of this comparatively still water, which was of an elliptical shape, was the Sargasso sea, so called on account of the quantity of weed, drift and wreckage floating about the surface.

Various descriptions of the fighting craft were given, most of them agreeing that she was a huge, dark schooner-rigged vessel, with several heavy guns, a large crew, and her hull apparently so much ballasted that her decks were flush with the water.

An appeal was made to the American government for protection by the ship owners whose vessels had been bombarded, but unfortunately the navy was crippled for want of sufficient vessels for its own ordinary requirements at that time.

It therefore became necessary to impress an equipped vessel into the service of the navy, and, as there was a person who had just the kind of craft required, who had on other occasions worked for the government, negotiations were at once begun with him for the use of his vessels.

He was a boy inventor of submarine boats, named Jack Wright, and, although not yet old enough to vote, he had made himself very wealthy and greatly celebrated by the use of his contrivances.

This remarkable boy resided in a thriving fisher village at the head of a bay running in from the Atlantic, called Wrightstown, in honor of his father, from whom Jack inherited his talent for inventing.

The young inventor was an orphan, but he had two staunch friends residing with him in the elegant mansion in which he dwelt.

Fritz Schneider was one, a youth a trifle older than Jack, short, fat, yellow-haired and blue-eyed, an expert electrician, a good cook, of a pugnacious nature, and a player on the accordeon.

He had been picked up, destitute, by Jack in the village, but by going with the young inventor on his adventurous trips he had amassed an enormous fortune, the utmost fame, and a parrot named Bismarck, which he had taught to talk.

The young inventor's other companion was a glass-eyed, wooden-legged old liar named Tim Topstay, who had been in the navy with Jack's father, and proved to be a skilled navigator, a large consumer of rum and tobacco, and a true-hearted friend.

Like the Dutch boy, his voyages with Jack had brought him wealth, renown, and a howling monkey named Whiskers, which he had taught numerous tricks, and a violent hatred of Fritz's parrot.

At the time alluded to Jack Wright had been experimenting with torpedoes by building a submarine boat capable of projecting a shell while under water, and blowing up a vessel on the surface that might be located from an inch to five miles from his boat.

The boat was, strictly speaking, a naval vessel, for she was built of thick plates of aluminum, had a motive power, run by electricity, of forty knots an hour, and carried a rapid fire gun in a revolving turret on top of her deckhouse.

Her length was exactly one hundred feet from the enormous screw aft to the elongated, diamond-shaped projection forward, through which ran the pneumatic torpedo tube, and her beam and depth were fifteen feet.

The ram simply consisted of the tube, with four powerful metal leaves, as sharp on the edges as razors, and capable of withstanding a terrific shock without breaking from the contact.

She was furnished with a strong searchlight, and was illumined by electric lights, the deck-house was divided into compartments for steering and living, a trap gave access to the upper deck, and her hull was modelled after the cutter

type of vessels, with a sharp bow, and a long, overhanging stern.

The Spitfire, as the electric torpedo ram was named, then laid in a flooded basin, in a large brick workshop at the foot of Jack's garden, beside which a creek flowed in from the bay.

Jack and his friends were on board of the boat, stowing away a large quantity of Whitehead, Lay, Sims and Brennan torpedoes in the boat's magazine, and assorting a number of outrigger, drifting and towing explosives, as he was intent upon experimenting in the bay with them.

The boy was a fine looking, dark-eyed and dark-haired fellow, with a courageous disposition, a generous heart and good judgment, and his athletic figure was clad in a handsome yachting costume.

Fritz and Tim, however, were not so fastidious, as the fat boy wore a suit such as he might have used in his native land, and the sandy-bearded old sailor had on a nautical garb, much the worse for wear.

The afternoon sun was declining on a pleasant May day, and slanting through the windows on Jack's latest invention, and it made the Spitfire's polished metal work gleam like burnished gold.

"There will be a big crowd down to the bay to watch us blowing up the old ship hulks I bought to experiment on," said the boy, with a smile, as they finished their work, "and I therefore want to have everything trim and taut on my new craft, boys."

"Ay, ay, my hearty!" cheerily replied Tim, blinking his solitary good eye and taking a chew of navy plug, "an' if yer finds any of these 'ere torpedoes any better'n the ones wot you invented fer ther air-gun, aboard o' ther sassy Spitfire here, I s'pose you'll adopt 'em, won't yer?"

"Certainly I will, but I doubt if there will be any better, for I have found that the gun-cotton and dynamite with which they are loaded is not so powerful an explosive as the Horrorite I invented. Yet the navies of all civilization still use the old-fashioned method, and swear by these Whitehead locomotive torpedoes. Is the machinery in good working order, Fritz?"

"Nein! Shiminey Christmas, vot you tink? I vork me here and fix me dem batteries all togedder?" queried the Dutch boy. "Yust vait und vwhile dem dere hawsers vhas gastein' off und der vorkmens der grick doors vhas obenin' I go me down by der baddery room und put me dose cells in series by der connecting wires alretty."

Jack nodded, gave the old sailor instructions to cast off the shore lines, and called to one of his mechanics to open the creek doors.

He then passed through a door into the pilot-house with Fritz.

It was a wedge-shape room, with small, square, heavy plate glass windows set in steel frames, over which metallic shutters could be drawn, and contained a wheel, a compass, and numerous peculiar looking registers, gauges, and meteorological instruments hanging on the walls.

Beside the wheel there stood a polished mahogany switch-board, on which were arranged a series of evers made of brass with rubber handles for insulation, and numerous plates, plugs, binding posts and covered copper wires for controlling the propeller, pumps, air reservoirs, lights, guns and machinery.

In back of this room there was a stateroom, following which were a dining room, kitchen, magazine, and store-room, while the extreme end compartment was used for going in and out under water.

Each room contained two circular port-holes, the glass covered by wire netting.

From the magazine a spiral metal staircase led up into the

gun-turret, while beneath it was a trap-door, leading down below, which Fritz ascended when he found himself in the boat's engine room.

It was illuminated by electric lights.

The compartment was small, and contained a complicated machine, several water and air pumps, a dynamo, oil engine and a rack containing a large number of cells of battery.

The Spitfire was run by this storage battery, the cells being replenished when necessary by the dynamo, which in turn was operated by a small, but powerful oil engine.

Fritz made a careful examination of the batteries, and joined them by their wires, after which he called up a speaking tube to Jack that everything was in order.

He then bolted down a trap in the floor and went upstairs.

This trap led down into three compartments below.

The two end ones were air reservoirs, and the middle one a water compartment, for when they desired to submerge the boat the pumps compressed the air from the middle room into the two end compartments, and water was let into the center chamber in quantities sufficient to overcome the buoyancy of the air.

In order to ascend the water was pumped out, and the air was allowed to expand into the midship compartment again.

When Fritz reached the pilot-house he saw that Tim had cast off the shore lines, the workmen had opened the creek door and Jack had hold of the wheel and had turned one of the levers.

Instantly the huge propeller began to whirl, the machinery throbbing down below, and the boat glided out of the shop into the creek, her ram cutting through the brine with a loud hiss.

Down the creek into the bay ran the torpedo boat, and her crew observed that the shores of the water were lined by scores of people from the village and all over the adjacent country, who had come down to watch the young inventor's experiments, for the Wrightstown local paper had apprised them of the event.

Out in the middle of the bay there were three old ships which the boy had purchased to experiment upon, and he ran his boat toward them when a cheer broke from the spectators.

A portable flag pole had been set on the boat, and in response to the acclamations of the populace Tim and Fritz ran the Stars and Stripes up the pole as the boat dashed over the bay.

CHAPTER II.

EXPERIMENTING WITH GUNS AND BOAT.

The Spitfire ran along with a swift, easy motion, her big propeller leaving a broad wake of foam astern, her well lubricated machinery moving like clockwork, and her indicators registering everything she did to the minutest fraction.

She answered her helm with speed and promptness, and when the boy had maneuvered her about the beautiful bay from the old village wharf to the lighthouse at the headland, he sent her flying over to the side where it was densely wooded.

Bringing her to a pause half a mile from the row of hulks and facing the rocky shore on the opposite side of the bay Jack maneuvered her ram to bear on the middle ship.

The butt of the pneumatic gun, the air reservoir of which was on top of the barrel outside, projected into the pilot-house, in front of the wheel.

It consisted of a powerful metal tube the same length as the torpedoes to be used, the rear end being closed with an air-tight door, and having a valve-lever, by pulling which the compressed air was instantaneously admitted into the cylinder, forcing the torpedo out at a pressure of 2,000 pounds on the square inch, thereby causing a high velocity.

Obedying Jack's instructions, Tim brought one of the torpedoes from the magazine, and opening the gun door, the boy inserted it.

It was twelve feet long by ten inches in diameter, the cross-section being circular in shape, and tapering to a point at each end.

It was regulated to travel submerged five hundred feet under water, at a uniform speed of twenty-four knots for six hundred yards, and in the event of its not striking its mark at the end of its range, it would automatically sink.

The torpedo was divided into several compartments, the foremost being charged with fifty pounds of Jack's explosive compound, called Horrorite, which was fired on the torpedo striking its mark.

On impact, the point of a needle in the end was forced into a detonator.

Compressed air in a second compartment actuated a small three-cylinder engine which drove two propellers in the tail, operating in opposite directions, while a third, or balance chamber, contained a mechanism to work two exterior rudders on each side of the tail, to keep the torpedo at a uniform depth during its run.

There were horizontal and vertical fins attached to it for other purposes.

Suffice it that when Jack had gauged the pneumatic gun and pulled open the valve, there came a terrific thud of escaping air, and a loud howl as the projectile shot out and plunged into the water.

Jack saw it sink to its gauged depth, and watching the furrow it made on top of the water, he saw it travel along submerged until it reached the boat he aimed at.

There sounded a terrible explosion as the torpedo struck, and the ship was blown to fragments and hurled high in the air.

A cheer burst from the spectators on shore.

"So much for my invention," said Jack, in satisfied tones, "with enough force, and twice the quantity of horrorite stored in that torpedo, I could blow the whole village of Wrightstown to pieces. And now to try the others. Get me a Whitehead, Fritz."

When the boy fired this locomotive it merely tore a hole in one of the boats, and failed to sink her.

The boy then tried a Lay torpedo on the same mark.

It was a cylinder charged with an explosive, its motive power being carbonic acid gas, generated in the usual way, and as only a small portion of the cylinder was visible, two rods marked its position.

It could be started, stopped and steered by means of an electric cable, which it paid out as it traveled, controlled by Jack's batteries.

This thing finished the work begun by the Whitehead by tearing such a hole in the hulk that she filled up and sank.

It took a Sims, an Ericsson and a Brennan torpedo to destroy the remaining boat, and when a man in a rowboat brought the news ashore that none of the torpedoes had acted as well as the one Jack invented, a salvo of cheers burst from every throat to congratulate the young inventor.

Jack waved his cap to his friends on shore, and calling Tim and Fritz into the pilothouse he closed the doors and windows.

"I'm going to send her under water to try her powers of endurance and the usefulness of my guns now, boys," said the boy briefly. "Fritz, go down below and see how the machinery

works, and you, Tim, can go up in the turret, draw in the gun and close up the ports."

The old sailor stumped away up the spiral staircase, while Fritz waddled down below, and as soon as they called through the speaking tubes to the boy that everything was in readiness he turned a switch and caused the air injectors to operate.

By means of tubing a steady supply was brought up from the reservoirs for them to breathe while submerged.

As soon as this was done Jack started an automatic spray of potash and quicklime to keep the air purified, for the lungs throw off carbonic acid gas, which left the boat by two valves in the roof.

He then started the pumps, and when the air was all compressed into the two end chambers he turned another lever which let the sea water into the midship chamber, and the Spitfire began to gradually sink.

The more water she shipped the deeper she went.

The frame upon which the boat was built was ponderous in the extreme, for there was a pressure of 8 1-2 pounds on the square inch, pressing her every twenty feet she descended.

As her entire exterior presented thousands of inches to bear that squeezing, it may be judged that the resistance of the boat had to be extraordinary to withstand it 200 feet below, where the pressure would be 47 pounds on the square inch.

The boy allowed the boat to go down to a depth of fifty feet, and then bringing her to a pause he started her screw.

She glided ahead through the gloom rapidly.

Jack turned two more of the levers.

Instantly a brilliant glow gushed from the electric incandescent lights, and streaming out the circular windows they formed a mellow halo around the boat.

The gleam of the searchlight was started, and a shaft of 90,000 candle power was flung out, cutting through the gloom like a razor, and illuminating the murky water for a long distance ahead of the Spitfire.

A strange submarine scene met Jack's view, but he was so accustomed to it that it now did not strike the wonderment to his soul that it did in the beginning of his career.

Myriads of fishes of various sizes and kinds were gliding through the dense water, and when the glare of the electric light struck their glistening scales, they radiated every color of the rainbow.

Great masses of water-logged wood, forests of sea weed, waving blades of eel grass, and black slimy rocks were to be seen on all sides, while armies of different crustaceans moved silently among them, their baleful round orbs glaring like fire at the boat as it passed them by.

The Spitfire made as good progress beneath the water as she did upon the surface, and Tim came down and joined the young inventor, asking:

"How does she work, my lad?"

"Beautifully; you see, I profited by past experiences, Tim."

"Aye, aye, an' I'm glad ter hear ther news."

"Have you found the turret to be perfectly water-tight?"

"Not a particle comes in. It's a-leakin' in back thar inter ther messroom, but ye kin easy stop that by a-seein' to it at once. Leavin' a leak unfixed is werry bad business, as I know by a adventure what happened ter me when I wuz a-cruisin' aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash, in ther navy——"

"For heaven's sake, Tim, don't spin any yarns now."

"Aye, but this one's a hummer," persisted Tim, expanding over it.

Jack uttered a weary sigh, and resigned himself to his fate.

"It happened this way," said Tim, gloating fiendishly at his victim. "One dark night ther frigate struck a rock and sprung a leak. I went below with a lantern and seed as ther garboard streaks had opened. Reportin' wol I found, ther commander said ter le' it be till ther next day. But in ther night

it kept a-gittin' wider and wider and wider, and ther sea kept a-comin' in faster and faster, and ther pumps couldn't git ahead o' ther influx. At last we gave up pumpin', all hopes o' savin' the ship desarted us, and we began to git ther boats ready——"

"I suppose the frigate sank then?"

"Lor', no! Fer jist as we wuz goin' ter launch ther quarter boats, ther blasted water began ter swell ther seams tergether again till they wuz as tight as a drum, and ther wessel wuz saved."

A look of disgust crossed Jack's face.

"Tell that to the marines!" he exclaimed. "I can't swallow it."

"Wot! Don't yer b'lieve me?" demanded Tim, in injured tones.

"Decidedly not! Ah—what's that—rocks?"

Jack's startled tones aroused Tim, and he glared out the window, when he saw a mass of rocks cropping up ahead.

They were called the Devil's Jaw's Rocks, and the boat was plunging straight toward them, when the boy observed that unless he steered her around in due time she would smash into them.

Unfortunately he saw that this was impossible, as the rocks spread out on either side like the arms of a chair, surrounding the boat on three sides completely.

The next best thing Jack could do was to stop the boat.

He grasped the lever to reverse it so the Spitfire would back water, when to his alarm the bolt at the joint, which had a flaw in it, snapped in two and rendered the lever useless.

On rushed the ram, and a minute afterward, ere anything could be done to avoid the catastrophe, she struck the rocks with a crash.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVER'S STRANGE PROPOSITION.

The shock of the impact was so violent that Jack and Tim were flung to the floor, and they heard Fritz utter a yell down below.

The boat rebounded from the rocks, plunged at them again, driven by the wheel, and remaining there, she came to a pause.

Her ram was bent by the terrific blow, and there were several of the huge rivets at the seam torn out, where the ram joined the prow.

A moment afterwards the sea water began to rapidly gush in.

Partially recovering, Jack sprang to his feet, and seeing the boat badly leaking, he rushed back into the store-room, which was filled with diving-suits, tools, and duplicate parts of various things, and he there procured a bolt.

Returning to the pilot-house, followed by Fritz, who was wildly asking what the matter was, he set to work upon the disabled lever, and put in the new bolt.

By that time there were several feet of water in the pilot-house, and the air was getting so compressed that the three gasped for breath, and suffered a suffocating sensation.

In a few words Jack explained the trouble.

"We must reach the surface," he gasped. "To remain here five minutes longer means suffocation and the loss of the boat. Here! I'll try to raise her to the surface."

He had the lever repaired by this time, and pulling it back, he stopped the propeller, reversed it, and as the ram backed away from the rocks he started the pumps.

The water was rapidly emptied out of her, and she arose to the surface in a sadly battered condition.

A shout arose from the spectators upon seeing her, but none of them knew what an accident she had met with.

The boy flung open one of the windows, and the fresh air revived them, after which he started the screw, and drove the boat rapidly back to his shop.

As soon as they got the Spitfire into the great brick building, the workmen were called, tackles were put onto the boat, and she was hoisted up from the basin upon some ways.

Here an examination of the damage was made, and they saw that although badly wrenched she could easily be repaired.

It showed Jack her weaknesses better than any other test could have done, and the other defects detected by Tim and Fritz were noted, examined and a course of repairing settled upon.

Disastrous as the trial had proven, the boy benefitted by it so much that most of the faults in the boat was disclosed to him, and he was thus enabled to rectify his errors.

A bevy of newspaper reporters came flocking to the house to learn the result of the boy's experiment, and he gave them a brief explanation.

"What the boat most requires," said Jack to his friends, when they were both alone in the boy's library, "is considerably more strength in the bows and four bobstays stiffened with turn buckles, running from the bow to the ram fins. They will hold her as stiff as a board. Of course she isn't expected to ram through stone walls, but she may encounter substances hard enough to give considerable resistance."

"Ha' ye decided upon ther class o' torpedoes ter be used?" asked Tim.

"My own make are the most powerful and destructive," answered Jack.

"Den you vos oxcept dot goferment's offer?" queried Fritz curiously.

"I have already written to the Secretary of the Navy, stating that I will utilize the Spitfire in an effort to exterminate the mysterious ship that infests the Sargasso Sea, attacking the passing vessels," replied Jack, "and he wrote me that a reward of \$75,000 will be paid for the accomplishment of the work, and added that he will have me invested with the proper authority to work for the navy."

"Good!" ejaculated Tim delightedly. "I'm just itchin' ter git this 'ere ole hulk inter active service agin. An' that reminds me o' a leetle incident wot happened when I wuz aboard o' ther ole frigate——"

But before Tim could get any further with his yarn Fritz seized an old accordeon, upon which he was wont to play, and much to Tim's rage he began to grind out a doleful melody upon it.

The ancient sailor hated the instrument intensely, and he uttered a roar and made a rush for the Dutch boy, swearing that he would demolish the instrument if he got hold of it.

Fritz, however, adroitly dodged out of his way, and picking the monkey, Whiskers, up from a chair upon which it sat, keenly blinking at them, he let the red howler fly at Tim.

Furious over such rough treatment, the monkey let out a yell, and burying its teeth in Tim's ear and its fists in his beard, it chattered and pulled and bit him like a demon.

A terrific uproar ensued, the old sailor raving and storming like a plute, the fat boy chuckling with delight, and Jack vainly shouting to restore order.

In the midst of the row Fritz's green parrot, Bismarck, came waddling into the room, harshly whistling to himself, and the moment Tim's solitary eye fell upon the bird he fired a chair at it.

Unfortunately Fritz was in the way and caught the missile on the shins, when several yards of expletives ripped in mixed lingo from his lips, and he danced a fantastic Highland fling.

"Donner und blitz!" he roared, screwing his face up to

a knot and shaking his fist at Tim, threateningly. "For vot you vos dry to murter me? Ach, Gott, you proke me mine leg alretty. Vill some vun hand me a growbar till I baralyze dot oldt son ouf a sea gooks?"

He made a rush for Tim, and they clinched.

Thereupon Whiskers made a leap for Bismarck, and while Tim and Fritz were struggling on the floor the parrot and monkey began a tussle under the table.

In the midst of the riot a servant entered the room.

"A gentleman in the parlor to see you, Mr. Wright," she announced.

Upon hearing this remark, hostilities between Tim and Fritz was suspended, and the boy left the library.

Crossing the hall, the boy passed into the magnificent drawing room and observed a man sitting there awaiting him.

He was a lanky individual, clad in a sombre suit of black, a choker collar around his neck, a high silk hat, and a cane in his hand; his angular, bony face was clean shaven, and he wore his long gray hair combed straight back from his high, narrow forehead.

He fastened a melancholy look upon the boy with his hollow eyes, and without a smile on his dark, grim face, he arose and bowed.

"Jack Wright, I presume?" he asked, in deep, bass tones.

"At your service, sir. Whom have I the pleasure of addressing?" asked Jack.

"My name is Roger Redyard," answered the stranger, "and I am a diver by profession and hail from Whitstable, England, which is, as you know, a great House-of-Call for divers, all its inhabitants having been divers from generation to generation there."

"And the object of your call upon me?" queried Jack curiously.

"Having heard of you at Whitstable, I have come over the ocean expressly to see you," replied Roger Redyard earnestly, "to solicit your co-operation in carrying out a project which I have had in view for many years past. It is to embark on a cruise to the North Atlantic in one of your wonderful submarine boats in search of a sunken city."

"A sunken city in the Atlantic?" echoed Jack, very much surprised.

"Exactly," replied the diver. "There is nothing strange in what I say, as there are numerous such places. Take, for example, the ancient city of Mellaria, in the Strait of Gibraltar, Algesiras, in the bay of the same strait, Belon, three leagues west of Tarifa, and the cities of Bactes, Cales, Helice, Bura, Lycadia, Sorea, in the Moluccas, and over two hundred cities of Friesland and Zealand. These eruptions of the sea are all due to earthquakes, you know."

"I have heard of them," the boy replied; "but which of these places have you designed to visit, and why do you wish to do so?"

"None of the cities I have mentioned interest me," promptly replied the diver. "The place I refer to lies buried under the Sargasso Sea."

"Indeed! Are you sure of this?" replied the boy interestedly.

"Positive of it. In the time of my great grandfather there was an island densely populated arising above the sea where the drift now floats, and it was a rich race, whose dwellings were molded from the purest gold ore, of which part of the island was composed. This ancestor of mine was shipwrecked and cast away among the strange race, and there saw the abundant wealth of the isle. He escaped, and years afterward there was a volcanic disturbance reported, and the waves swallowed up this island and its inhabitants."

"Well?" queried Jack, as the diver paused.

"A record of the fact was made by my grandparent, and the paper was put away and never referred to again. I suc-

ceeded to the ownership of the old homestead in course of time, and accidentally found the parchment record. Impressed by its veracity, a year ago I visited the grassy sea, and dove down to test the truth of the story. But the depth to the bottom far exceeded the one hundred and fifty feet to which I descended. Yet by the electric light I carried, I saw the towers and walls of a ruined, ancient city below where I hung, and it satisfied me that the old parchment story was a true narrative."

"Strange!" said Jack. "Did any one else know about it?"

"To be sure; every one of the men upon the vessel I employed."

"Have you got the parchment with you?"

"Yes; and here it is," said the diver, handing it over.

"Leave it with me and return to-morrow," said Jack. "I am going to the grassy sea on a government mission, and if my friends pin their faith on your story, we may take you along and investigate it."

"You will share a vast fortune if you do so," said Roger Redyard, and a few minutes afterwards he took his departure.

CHAPTER IV.

A BOATLOAD OF RUFFIANS.

While Jack and his two friends were at work the next day repairing the electric torpedo boat, the young inventor explained to them what the purport of Roger Redyard's call had been.

They were very much surprised at the news, and both agreed that it would be an excellent plan to impress the diver into their service and test the truth of his story when they reached the grassy sea on their cruise to subdue the craft that was then causing so much annoyance to the American merchant marine.

"Thar's one thing certing," said Tim reflectively, "an' that are as four men can manage the Spitfire a good deal easier'n three men, an' ther lubber would come in mighty handy."

"You must not lose track of another fact," replied Jack in quiet tones. "He may be an impostor, for I did not ask him for any references as to his character."

"Maybe he only mit us vishes to go so dot he could stole some ouf your ideas how vun ohf dese poats to built," suggested Fritz.

"Or perhaps he is a crank," said the boy. "You both know that my inventions keep me flooded with letters from crack-brained people all over the country, who wish advice upon impossible flying machines, who suggest the most outrageous plans for overland motors, who ask questions I wouldn't answer, suggest plans I wouldn't follow, and, in short, pester the life out of me. If I didn't keep a good girl at the door I'd soon be overrun by all sorts of cranks, beggars, peddlers, and Heaven only knows what not. Yet the girl seemed to have confidence enough in this man to admit him."

"Pervidin', then, as everything's O. K., we'll take him?"

"All right, Tim; and now the Spitfire is finished."

She was so well repaired that it seemed impossible for her to sustain any damage, and Fritz remarked, glancing at the ram:

"If ve vhas to dot crassy sea gone ve found dem knives on der ram vill be yust vot ve vant to cut troo dem sea veds."

The supper bell rang just then, and leaving the workmen to launch the boat, Jack and his friends entered the house.

It was afterwards found that the Spitfire did not leak a drop, her engines worked properly, and she was now stronger than ever.

Night fell upon the village, and the mail came in, bringing Jack a bulky letter from Washington, containing a Letter of Marque, thorough instructions, and a map of his course.

That settled the boy's business with the government, and he merely wrote an acknowledgment of the letter, and stated that he would start for the Sargasso within a fortnight.

He had hardly completed this letter when two men called, and the boy was summoned into the reception room.

To his surprise he saw that one of them was a very wealthy and much respected steamship owner of New York.

"Mr. Grant!" he exclaimed, smilingly, as he advanced and shook hands with the old gentleman. "This is an unexpected pleasure, I assure you. Welcome to Wrightstown."

"The fact is, my dear boy," smilingly replied the old gentleman, in warm tones, "I've been called upon by my old friend here——"

"Ah!" said Jack, recognizing the steamship owner's companion to be the diver who called the day previously. "Mr. Redyard—yes, I remember him. He was here yesterday. Be seated, gentlemen."

"As I was saying," continued Mr. Grant, taking a chair, "this chap I have known intimately from his infancy. He is a most honest and sincere man, and having told me what has brought him here, I have given in to his urging and came up here to recommend him; as he fears you might not give credence to his integrity, coming to you as he did, a total stranger."

"I am very glad to hear you say this, Mr. Grant," said the boy earnestly, "as it banishes any doubts I might have had of him, and proves that his story, wonderful though it is, deserves consideration."

"I'd stake my life on Redyard's veracity!" emphatically declared Mr. Grant, "and I consider that you will gain an enormous fortune if you were to follow out his plan to reach the sunken city of the Atlantic."

"There could be but little extra effort in doing so," said Jack, "for I have just concluded an agreement with the government to undertake the extermination of the vessel cruising upon the waters under which this sunken city lies."

"What! Have you been chosen for this task?"

"Yes, sir; and I sail in a fortnight."

"Thank Heaven for that, for none of my steamships was among the victims of that rascals, and as I have the greatest confidence in your ability, I feel certain that we will soon be rid of that accursed scourge, who has made ocean travel a terror to passengers, and brought a loss of thousands of dollars upon the American ship owners."

"You are now satisfied of my veracity, I hope, Mr. Wright?" queried Roger Redyard in earnest tones.

"Perfectly," replied the boy in open candor, "and if you will join us here in a week we will be ready to start and carry you with us. We can arrange a contract for this matter then, to share among four the proceeds of any result we may meet with, and you can aid us in the management of our boat, and give us the benefit of your experience as a practical diver. How does that suit?"

"Excellent! Splendid!" replied Redyard delightedly. "I shall be on hand at the stipulated time prepared for the trip, and I pledge you, sir, you will find me a valuable acquisition to your party. But what ship is this I heard you speaking of as haunting the Sargasso Sea and making itself so obnoxious to passing vessels?"

Jack explained the matter to him.

Redyard pondered deeply a few minutes, and then there suddenly flashed a startled look over his dark face.

"By heavens, it can't be possible!" he suddenly cried, pounding the table with his fist and springing to his feet with such an unexpected movement as to startle Jack.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the boy.

"Mean? Why, it has suddenly occurred to me that I may have a solution of the reason for that strange schooner attacks!" excitedly replied the diver.

"Can it be possible? And what is your impression?"

"Why, don't you recollect, when I told you my story of the sunken city of the Atlantic, I answered you that the entire crew of the ship I employed were aware of the fact that the sunken city contained a vast treasure?"

"Yes, I recollect that you said so," answered Jack.

"Then, what is more likely than that these men, or some of them at least, imbued with a thirst to secure some of that gold, have sailed a ship there and are the very ones who are committing the assaults you mention?"

"I don't see why they should act that way," said Mr. Grant.

"Don't you? Well, I do. They must naturally be suspicious of every craft that draws near them, fearing a piratical attack to wrest from them what gold they might have secured by dredging, grapneling or dragging. On the other hand, they may want to frighten passing vessels away, to hide their work, or, again, there may be several parties after the gold, and the one who arrived there first, suspecting every approaching craft may be his rival, he probably drives them away."

"Any of those reasons sound plausible," said Jack musingly. "At any rate, we can easily ascertain the object of the ocean outlaws when we encounter them."

Soon afterwards the ship owner and the diver took their departure, and Jack joined Tim and Fritz out in the workshop and explained to them what had occurred.

"You see," said he, in conclusion, "all our doubts of Roger Redyard are now settled, for the man who vouched for him is a reliable person whom I highly esteem."

"Dot saddles id, den, Dim," said Fritz, with a broad grin. "You vhas got a victim at last dot you can stuff mit your lies."

"Vast, thar, yer lubber; don't yer git too personal!" growled the ancient mariner, with a scowl. "Them what hears ther yarns I spins gains a heap more o' practical infirmation than you has."

Jack and his friends then made a close examination of the boat, and having seen that she was once more in first rate condition, they made out a list of requirements for their voyage to the Sargasso and left the shop.

The night had closed dark and storm threatening, and as the three passed the great brick building to return to the house, the boy heard the hissing sound of whispers coming from the direction of the creek, and he came to a sudden pause.

"Hold on!" he muttered. "What was that—men's voices?"

"Aye, I reckon it wuz," assented Tim softly.

"Und dere vhas der sount ouf oars," whispered Fritz.

With their suspicions aroused the three dropped down upon their hands and knees, and crept across the lawn among the trees toward the stone bulkhead of the creek.

There was a broad flight of marble stairs leading down from the grounds to the water, and when they reached the top of them and peered over they beheld a large skiff filled with men gliding in from the bay.

They carried a ship's lantern, and by its light Jack saw that they were as ruffianly a looking gang as ever he had seen.

CHAPTER V.

TRAPPED.

The men in the rowboat had ceased conversing, and quietly pulled their boat up to one of the ring bolts in the wall to which they tied the painter.

All except one of them debarked upon the stairs, and Jack and his companions thereupon retreated behind the trees, from which point of espionage they watched the strangers.

Effectually concealed in the denser gloom under the foliage, they saw the men gather in a group, and heard one of them say:

"This must be the place, boys. Now for our plan of action. Let me see—there are ten of you; quite sufficient to overpower the young inventor. I will go to the front door, ring for admission, and when I have got Jack Wright engaged in conversation, you all must be ready to rush in and overpower him. Remember, though, to make no noise and to do him no injury. We must carry him away bodily to our craft in the bay and ship him out of the country before he has time to start upon his cruise. Should he make that trip to the Sargasso Sea it would prove fatal to our projects. We must prevent it at all hazards in order to save ourselves."

"How do you know that he has been commissioned by the American government to go on the cruise?" one of the men asked.

"Because the spy whom we had watching Roger Redyard in Europe learned that the diver designed to come here to procure the assistance of Jack Wright to visit the sunken city, and when we left the Sargasso, upon my receipt of this information, and reached New York, I there read in the newspaper that this boy inventor was empowered as a privateer to exterminate the ship of the Sargasso for a reward of \$75,000. Now that you all know just how the case stands, you can realize how important it is that we stop this expedition, and I shall look for your strongest efforts to carry out my scheme."

"Aye, aye! Depend upon us!" cried the rest unanimously.

Then, as noiselessly as possible, the whole gang proceeded toward the house, and with a puzzled look upon his face, which his friends did not see in the gloom, Jack whispered:

"In Heaven's name what is the secret governing those wretches who are ravaging the Sargasso?"

"Blast my timbers if I kin understand it!" Tim replied.

"Donner vetter, Shack!" said Fritz excitedly, "don't dese mens vhas some ouf der grew ouf dot ships vot ve vhas going after by der crassy sea alretty vonct?"

"It seems so. They must be desperately anxious to prevent every one from getting near them to discover or interrupt their mysterious operations, to get to this excess."

"Wot are ye a-goin' ter do about it, lad?"

"I'm going to trap these rascals, and when they are in my power, if it is within the bounds of possibility, I am going to wring a confession of what prompts their motive from them."

"Ach, hurry ub, den," eagerly said Fritz, stripping off his jacket, in anxious anticipation of a fight. "I vhas gedding rusty for vant ouf breakin' somepody's neck, und der sooner as ve kills dose rascals, so much der petter I vhas bleased mineselluf."

"Hold on, Fritz," interposed Jack, detaining the intrepid Dutch boy, as he started to rush after their enemies. "Not so fast, my boy. I want to take those villains by surprise. We have got an advantage and must retain it."

He hastily gave his friends some instructions, and while they were hastening away toward the workshop, the boy went ahead to the house.

"Strange," he muttered, "how those men, isolated upon a ship in the Atlantic Ocean, should have heard all about our movements, and now come here to interfere with us. The most powerful incentive must be prompting them."

Jack passed into the house by a side door, and a servant soon announced that there was a gentleman in the parlor.

"Show him into the library here," said Jack quietly.

He then whistled through a speaking tube on the wall.

"Well?" came the reply in Tim's voice.

"You'll find me in the library," said Jack.

He dropped the tube just as the girl ushered in his caller, and casting a swift, searching glance upon the man, Jack saw that he was a tall young fellow, attired in the blue uniform and cap of a naval officer.

He had light hair, blue eyes, a sun-burned face, and a sharp nose, and looked like anything but the ruffian Jack had mentally pictured him.

He returned Jack's searching stare with interest a moment, as if sizing up the kind of a person he had to deal with, and then, making a polite bow, he asked in pleasant tones:

"Have I the honor of addressing Mr. Jack Wright?"

"That is my name, sir," said Jack. "Be seated."

The boy pushed a handsomely upholstered arm-chair up to the man, and he sat down in it with his hands upon the arms.

Scarcely was he seated, however, when from within the padding of the chair several strong, curved steel bands shot out on all sides, and claspings the man around the neck, chest and stomach, rigidly held him where he sat!

This mechanical device was an arrangement of Jack's invention, and took the man so by surprise that he uttered a startled exclamation, and made a quick effort to get up.

It was utterly impossible for him to do so, however, for although his arms and legs were not pinioned, his head and trunk were held as if in a vise, the weight of his body, in sitting down having set a hidden mechanism in motion that caused the steel bands to seize the man tightly in the manner described.

"Heavens!" he gasped, turning as pale as death upon finding himself rendered helpless. "What does this mean, sir?"

"What is your business with me?" queried Jack coolly.

"Business? Why—but say—don't you see how I'm caught?"

"Of course," assented the boy, with a nod. "You can't budge an inch."

"This is the result of design, and not an accident, then?"

"Decidedly. Now tell me what you want."

"But this is outrageous. Release me at once."

"That is not answering my question," said Jack.

"I have called upon business. This is a nice way to treat a caller."

"State what your business with me is."

"Not until you release me from this trap."

"Impossible! Impossible, sir!"

"Why have you played this trick upon me?"

"Simply to hold you at my mercy."

"Evidently so, but what actuated you?"

"To prevent you carrying out your designs upon me."

"Ha! Then you know——"

"I am aware that you came here to abduct me."

"Exposed, by thunder!"

"The trouble with your scheme was that you explained it in my hearing."

"Do you mean to say that you were in the yard just now?"

"I was; and seeing you and your men land, I heard all you said."

"Now I understand the situation, confound it!" cried the man, "but I am not lost yet, as you will find out."

He drew a whistle from his pocket and blew a shrill blast when like magic his men appeared at the windows and flinging them open they rushed into the library.

"We're exposed! I'm caught!" cried the man furiously. "Go for him, and then release me, boys."

The men rushed for Jack, when the boy sprang to the wall and pushed upon a press button, signaling to his friends in the shop.

The next moment Jack drew a revolver from his pocket and facing his foes, he leveled it at them, and cried:

"Stop where you are, or I'll fire!"

There was a ring to his voice that brought them to an irresolute halt, and they gazed askance at their leader.

"Fire upon him!" the latter individual gasped. "The case is desperate. If foiled, we must escape. Charge on him!"

The men attempted to obey, when Jack's self-cocking revolver began to bark, and several of the rascals fell.

Furious now, they began to rave and swear, as they came to a pause again, and the next moment every one of them who carried a weapon produced it.

Upon seeing that he would get riddled with bullets Jack suddenly held up his hand, and cried:

"Don't fire! It will only make matters worse."

"Surrender and release me then!" exclaimed the prisoner.

The boy seemed to hesitate.

He shot a glance at the window.

"No," he replied, "I can't do that."

"Then I'll have you killed and escape, anyway."

"That is impossible. Look around you, and observe that the first one to move hand or foot will fall dead in his tracks."

As Jack spoke, he made a sweeping gesture around the room, and the men opposing him followed his motion with their eyes, and giving utterance to a chorus of cries, they lowered their weapons, and huddled in a group with blanched faces.

For, led by Tim and Fritz, a hundred of Jack's workmen, armed with pistols and rifles had come crowding into every doorway and window, and were then aiming their weapons at the gang, as if about to shoot them down.

"We are lost—lost!" groaned Jack's prisoner, despairingly.

CHAPTER VI.

A GRAND SUCCESS.

With an expression of triumph on his face, Jack glanced around at the men who had designed to do him so much injury, and then demanded sternly of them:

"Will you submit to capture, or shall I order my men to pour in a volley that will destroy every one of you?"

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" hoarsely cried the men.

"Then fling down your weapons and throw up your hands."

"Yes, yes!" resounded from every lip.

And the next moment the whole subdued crowd were at the boy's mercy, wearing a most crestfallen air.

"Tim! Fritz! Come in here with a rope and bind them!" cried Jack.

The sailor and Dutch boy complied, and within a few minutes they had the whole gang tied together, and their leader out of the chair among them.

"We will lock them up in the village jail now," said Jack, when everything was in readiness for departure. "You," he added, addressing his workmen, "can form in two files, one on each side of them. Shoot them down if they attempt to escape while you are guarding them on the way to the jail."

With this arrangement, the boy marched his prisoners from the room, and when they were outside the workmen formed files on each side, and they started for the jail.

A crowd was attracted in the street, which rapidly grew in numbers, and among them there appeared the man who had been left in the creek to guard the boat.

He saw what had befallen his companions, and with a frightened look upon his face he hastened away, returned to the ship they had come from, which lay at anchor in the bay, and apprising the remainder of the crew what had happened, they at once hoisted anchor, raised the sails and fled.

Jack marched his prisoners to the jail, where he was joined by the local magistrate, who committed them upon hearing a recital of Jack's complaint against them.

Despite every effort to draw a confession from them, not one of the rascals would say a word to condemn himself.

Realizing that they must have come from some vessel in the bay, as soon as they were incarcerated Jack drew Tim and Fritz aside, and confided his suspicions to them.

"We had better scour the water," remarked the boy, "and if they have got a vessel out there, we can capture her and perhaps gather in the rest of this treacherous crew."

"Aye, lad, an' if they are some o' ther lubbers wot we're a-goin' after ter ther Sargasso," said Tim, "when we gits ter that 'ere sea we won't ha' so many ter fight."

"Den ve petter tooken der Spitfires," suggested Fritz, "und ve den could see vetter she all righd vhas or not after dot smashes oup vot she hat alretty."

"A good suggestion," assented Jack. "We can kill two birds with one stone, as the saying goes, by so doing."

They thereupon hastened back to the shop, boarded the ram, and Jack sent her down the creek and out upon the bay, while Tim and Fritz went below to see how everything was working after repairing her.

The boy started the searchlight, and swept the water in all directions with it, but saw no strange vessel.

He then ran the Spitfire up to a craft, with the crew of which he was acquainted.

She was anchored off the old wooden pier among a flotilla of fishing smacks belonging to the occupants of the vine-covered cottages lining the shore.

There were some of the men upon her deck, and as the torpedo boat ran up to her, the boy hailed the crew.

"Hulloa, Jack!" yelled the captain, appearing at the bulwark. "What's wanted now?"

"Have you seen a strange craft in here to-night, captain?"

"Aye—a large schooner called the Deer. She sent a boat's crew ashore an hour ago."

"What has become of her?"

"Set sail ten minutes before you appeared, and left the bay."

"By jingo, they've taken warning!" muttered Jack.

"Anything gone wrong?" queried the skipper.

"Yes—I'm after her!" replied Jack. "They are outlaws!"

The captain whistled with surprise.

Before he could say anything else the ram glided away.

Jack yelled down the tubes to his friends what he heard, and Tim came stumping up into the pilot-house.

"Shall we pursue her?" queried the boy.

"Lordy, she can't be far ahead o' us!" replied Tim.

"Then I'll do it. Go down and tell Fritz."

Away dashed the boat for the headland, and rushing out upon the dark sea with her searchlight blazing far ahead, Jack turned her to the southward.

She had come from New York he knew by what he heard her captain say, and he therefore inferred that she would return to the same place.

In this the boy made no error, for within quarter of an hour the searchlight suddenly fell upon a schooner under full sail ahead, and directing a glass at her the boy made out the name "Deer" upon her stern.

Tim and Fritz came in just then.

"There she is now," said Jack, pointing ahead.

"Sailin' fer all she's worth, too!" remarked Tim.

"I vhas some pad news for you got," said Fritz.

"Has the Spitfire shown any defect?"

"Nein. Dis poat vhas all right, but when ve vhas exber mending' ve used oup all der dorbedoes, und now ve don't go nodings but rifles und bistols to depend on."

A frown of annoyance crossed Jack's brow.

"This is a sorry plight to be placed in," he exclaimed.

"Without such arms," he continued, "we cannot very well overcome our enemies on yonder boat, for they must realize that we are in pursuit of them by this time, and if they are armed with guns, they will doubtless open fire upon us."

"Lor! Wot's ter be did, then?"

"We might ram their craft and sink her."

"Dere don't vhas some odder way," said Fritz.

"Then here goes to hail her!"

Turning one of the levers, Jack drove the boat ahead till she was close to the flying vessel, and then yelled:

"Schooner ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" came the reply.

"Haul to!"

"What for?"

"Arrest!"

"Never!"

"Refuse, and I'll wreck your craft."

"We'll fire a gun if you get too near."

"Stand by, boys!" cried Jack. "I'll charge her."

He saw the Deer's crew trimming a swivel gun to bear upon them, and putting on full speed, he steered the Spitfire to aim straight at the run of the schooner on the after port side.

Away shot the submarine boat like a streak of lightning, the water whistling where the keen blades of the ram gashed through it, as her enormous propeller flew around.

She reached the Deer like a cyclone.

Crash! Bang! went the ram into the schooner.

The harsh sound of splintering planks rang above the swash of the sea, and was followed by a yell from the crew.

There were not many men on the vessel.

Never expecting such an attack, they were very much amazed.

A huge hole was stove in the hull of the vessel through which the water poured in torrents, and the Deer swung up in the wind, while the Spitfire recoiled.

The shock of her ram had done no injury to her now as it was so firmly braced, and Jack saw what damage he had done with intense satisfaction.

His boat had acted precisely as he wished her to.

The blades of the ram were so arranged that when the gun barrel, which constituted the ram, struck the vessel, they caused the Spitfire to recoil spontaneously.

"Will you give in now, and I'll save your craft from going down!" shouted Jack to the dismayed fugitives.

"Yes, yes!" was the frantic reply.

The Spitfire ran alongside of the fast-sinking schooner, and, obeying Jack's order, a hawser was flung to Tim, who had gone out on deck, and the sailor made it fast to a stanchion.

Then the men on the rammed vessel boarded the torpedo boat and were locked up in the storeroom.

Jack saw that by quick work he could tow the Deer into Wrightstown Bay before she went down.

Accordingly, he put speed upon his boat, and turning her up the coast, she started off, pulling the schooner after her.

The captured boat was sunk to her scuppers by the time she reached the town, and Jack ran her alongside of the deck, to which she was fastened so she could not sink.

The news had spread among the villagers that Jack had gone after the boat belonging to the men who tried to abduct him, and there was a large crowd to meet them on the dock.

CHAPTER VII.

AWAY FOR THE SARGASSO.

Upon incarcerating his prisoners, Jack telegraphed to Roger Redyard to come up from New York at once.

On the following morning the diver presented himself at the boy's house, when Jack gave him an account of what had transpired, and said:

"The reason why I sent for you was to see if you could recognize any of the prisoners."

"I'll tell you as soon as I set eyes on them."

"Follow me to the jail, then."

"I know nothing about the Deer," said Redyard, as they went out together and proceeded to the prison.

A short time afterward they reached the jail, and were ushered into the cell department, when the ringleader of the prisoners was shown to Redyard.

Every one of the crew of the ship were strangers to him, but as soon as he beheld the captain, he cried:

"By thunder, it's Luke! Dudley!"

The prisoner started and turned pale upon seeing Redyard.

"You recognize this man, then?" queried Jack.

"Aye! He is one of the men I employed on the craft I used at the time I went diving for the treasure of the sunken city."

"Then your surmise was correct."

"It's evident that those men are following my example, and the cause of all their villainy upon the Sargasso is a greedy desire to retain control of the treasure without any interference."

"In that case," said Jack, "they must have met with some encouragement. It is likely they've fished up some of the treasure, else they would not stay there and make an effort to drive away every approaching vessel with their guns. Question this man, anyway."

"You may as well confess now as later in the court. Dudley," said Redyard to the prisoner. "Will you own up what it was that brought you to the Sargasso?"

"I don't mind telling you," replied the prisoner, "for I suppose you will find out all about it any way, later on. There were four officers on your craft when you went prospecting for the sunken city, as you may recollect——"

"Yes, yes, go on!" impatiently said Redyard.

"We met and agreed to purchase four vessels to carry on the work you seemed to have abandoned, whereupon the crew divided itself into several factions with the same idea in view. We warned them that if we met any of their vessels on the Sargasso while we were there we would drive them off with our guns. A bitter quarrel ensued. We separated, each party swearing it would carry out its resolve. We purchased four schooners, looking very much alike, and with alterations and paint strengthened the resemblance so as to individualize ourselves from other vessels——"

"Ah! Then there were four instead of one schooner?"

"Yes; my vessel, the Deer, was one of them. The old crew fitted out several vessels and went to the Sargasso, and we have been busy ever since driving them away."

"How was it you fired on vessels that were in no way concerned in the matter?"

"It was the result of accident rather than design, as we imagined that every craft that approached was one of our enemies, except in the case of steamships."

"I don't wholly believe that," said Redyard. "In fact, I am confident that you had some ulterior motive in view. Anyway, didn't you meet with some success in getting at the gold?"

"We dragged up some house ornaments, and in one instance a small golden idol," hesitatingly replied the prisoner.

"I thought you had some encouragement."

He questioned the man at some length further, but could gain but very little more information, as the prisoner suddenly took it into his head to keep still.

Jack and Redyard then left the prison.

It was very evident to the young inventor that he had a large and dangerous ellipse of desperate men to contend against upon his voyage—men who, having a wealth of gold in view, would bitterly resent having it wrested from them.

"Judging by the large crew carried by the Deer," said Jack, "there must be a large number of men among the remaining three ships, and if they are a lawless set, it is plain that we will have a hard time of it with them."

In the afternoon he had the men indicted for what they had done, and their vessel was searched for proof against them, when the startling discovery was made that she carried amongst her cargo a miscellaneous lot of goods bearing the shipping mark of several different vessels.

Upon an inquiry into this matter, it was ascertained that the ships upon which the goods had been sent had never reached their destinations.

By this it was readily inferred that the hostile vessels that haunted the Sargasso were not merely peaceful treasure-hunters, but added the hideous crime of piracy to their work.

Of course, this had to be proven; but every circumstance had such a suspicious look that there was not much doubt about it in Jack's mind.

Roger Redyard resolved to remain in Wrightstown now, and accepted Jack's invitation to stop at the boy's house.

He was therefore enabled to lend his assistance at fitting out the Spitfire for her cruise, and thus make himself familiar with the peculiar boat.

The work was pushed forward vigorously, now that their enemies were disposed of temporarily, and at the end of a week the boat was ready for service.

At the stipulated time our friends embarked, taking the monkey and parrot with them, and left Wrightstown.

The sea was as smooth as a sheet of glass, every one was in high spirits, and the boat worked like clockwork.

Jack laid his course straight for the grassy sea as possible, and on the morning of the second day out from port he was suddenly aroused from his slumbers by hearing a tremendous commotion out in the pilot-house.

He hastily arose, dressed himself, and went out.

Tim was at the wheel, and Fritz and Redyard were on deck.

"It's a floatin' bar'l, I tell ye!" Tim was shouting.

"Got oudt!" the Dutch boy answered. "I told yer id vhas a log."

"You are both mistaken. It's a whale!" said Redyard.

"Where is it?" queried Jack, running out on deck.

"Off to the leeward, there," replied Redyard, pointing.

Jack scanned the large dark object floating in the sea very carefully about half a league distant.

He soon saw that Redyard was right.

"It is a whale, for it's spouting now," he remarked, as he eyed the jet of vapor flung up by the leviathan.

"It's a little out of its latitude," remarked Redyard, "but I suppose they often get down this way."

"What a fine shot it would make," remarked Jack. "I am going up in the conning tower and try my new five-inch, rapid-fire gun. Come along, Redyard."

Followed by the diver, Jack mounted the spiral staircase and entered the round-top cupola in which the gun was mounted.

This turret revolved by machinery, and was perforated by a large number of plate glass, round windows.

The gun was capable of firing five rounds in seventeen seconds, primed brass cartridge cases and shells being loaded together, and a system of breech mechanism allowing great rapidity of opening and closing.

Hydraulic cylinders checked the recoil in twelve inches, and a powerful spring returned the gun to the battery almost instantaneously.

"She's a light looking weapon," said Jack "and one man can train, elevate and manage her, yet she throws a fifty-pound shell with a muzzle velocity of 2,500 feet a second, and I use a smokeless powder that can send an armor-piercing shell through two calibres of steel at close range."

"Are you marksman enough to hit that whale from here?"

"I have had some practice at gunnery," replied the boy, "and might be able to do it, but it's a long shot at a small mark. I'll try it, however, as I have never used this gun before."

He opened the breech and shoved in a cartridge, closed the door, and took careful aim at the whale.

Then he fired the shot.

A deafening roar pealed from the gun.

Not an atom of smoke followed it.

With a scream, the projectile shot from the muzzle and went roaring over the waves towards the whale.

Jack eagerly peered out the gun port with the diver, and saw the shell go flying straight towards its mark.

It struck the whale.

There followed a tremendous upheaval of water and the torn fragments of the whale, and a moment afterwards all that remained of the leviathan floated lifelessly upon the sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DOZEN CASTAWAYS.

Two days after the success of the turret gun was assured by trying it on the whale, the Spitfire came in sight of her destination, and Fritz, who was at the wheel, descried a distant small sail.

He viewed it for a long while, and then uttered the cry of:

"Sail-ho! Sail-ho!"

The rest were finishing their luncheon in the cabin.

They came rushing up forward into the pilot-house as soon as they heard the Dutch boy's voice.

"Where away?" demanded Jack, glancing out.

"Straight ahet ouf der Spitfires," replied Fritz.

"Did you make her out?" asked Jack, seeing the distant sail.

"Shiminey Christmas, no. I can't look fife miles away."

"Let me have the glass," said Jack, taking it from him.

He leveled it at the distant white sail, and presently said:

"Why, boys, it's a ship's quarter boat, loaded with men."

"That's strange, my lad," remarked Tim wonderingly.

"And they are signaling to us," added Jack, presently.

"Castaways from some wreck, I s'pose," commented Tim.

"Steer for them, and we'll find out who they are," said Jack, "for the jury-mast and torn sail they carry will not bring them to us in a hurry."

The fat boy nodded, and Tim turned to Redyard, and remarked:

"A-seein' them 'ar poor fellers in that boat reminds me o' ther time I wuz wrecked by a iceberg on ther coast o' Afriky."

"Icebergs around Africa?" skeptically echoed Redyard.

"Aye, now; it sounds queer, don't it, but you'll soon see how true it wuz. I wuz ther fust mate o' ther tradin' ship Sally Ann Tee, an' we'd taken a cargo o' ivory an' diamonds from—"

"A cargo of diamonds? For heaven's sake, who was the millionaire who owned them?"

"I mean we had a cigar box full of 'em, among our cargo."

"Oh—that's different."

"Fer p'ceed," gruffly said Tim, who did not like to have his yarns interrupted with doubting comments, "it wuz durin' ther middle watch o' a werry dark night. Indeed, it wuz so dark a feller couldn't see his flipper athwart his squintin'-tackle. I wuz on duty, an' ther ship wuz a-driftin' north by west in a powerful gale o' wind, along ther Guinea coast, all sails reefed, an'——"

"For the Lord's sake," impatiently said Redyard, "why don't you get down to facts? We don't care about your details."

Tim gave a grunt, took a chew, and growled:

"Well, if yer ain't pertickler, I'll veer ahead, my hearty. We run afoul o' a iceberg, an' stove a hole in ther bow. Ther ship went down, an' we only had time ter crowd inter one boat ter save our lives. We didn't dare ter land, an' as we looked at each other's pale faces——"

"Say," dryly remarked Redyard, "you just said it was such a dark night you couldn't see your hand 'before your face. Now, how in thunder could you see that it was an iceberg you struck—how could you see the shore was half a mile away—how could you count just forty men in such dense gloom—how could you see that your faces were so pale, and——"

"Avast, thar," interposed Tim grimly. "I'm doin' as yer axed me—givin' yer facts, as ye don't care fer details."

Redyard burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"That's one on me," he remarked. "Tim, you've got the best of the argument. But as the castaways are so close that you can't (thank Heaven) continue your yarn just now, we will leave the rest to be told at some future time."

"Yer will be lucky if ye hears it!" replied Tim. "I gin'rally tells 'em ter people wot enjoys 'em, an' as you're so flap-doodled critical, I ain't a-goin' ter bother wi' yer no more."

"For which I am truly grateful," muttered Redyard.

Jack had taken the wheel from Fritz.

By this time the Spitfire had arrived within half a mile of the quarter boat, and Jack could see with the naked eye that the occupants were frantically signaling to him.

Presently he heard their voices calling:

"Ship ahoy!"

"Help! Help!"

"Save us! Oh, save us!"

The submarine boat was steered straight for the boat, and soon reached its dozen occupants, when Jack left the wheel in Tim's hands and ran out on deck with Fritz.

A line was flung to the sailors in the boat, and making it fast to their cockle shell, they were hauled alongside of the Spitfire and clambered aboard, in the meantime uttering the most extravagant expressions of joy.

The boy saw that they were all American seamen, and were evidently suffering the greatest privations.

"Thank God, we are saved at last!" remarked a tall, bearded fellow in fervent tones. "Five days adrift in that open boat, with no food or water, young man!" he added to Jack.

"Poor fellows! I pity you!" said the boy. "Here, Fritz, see if you can't fix some food for them! Redyard, fetch some water!"

Away hurried the diver and the Dutch boy, and while the latter returned with a pail of water and gave the castaways a drink, Fritz began to hustle about the kitchen and cook them a hearty meal.

In the meantime Jack addressed the bearded man with:

"Can it be possible you have been suffering so long?"

"Aye, and glad enough were we to take that chance, rather than endure the misery we were undergoing previously."

"I do not understand your meaning. Was your ship wrecked?"

"No—scuttled."

"By whom?"

"Pirates."

"Where?"

"In this sea."

"Tell me how it happened."

"We are the crew of the ship Boston Betty, and were on our way to Liverpool when we were attacked by a large black schooner with decks flush with the sea, called the Goblin Girl——"

"Ah!" interposed Jack. "The gold divers!"

Every one shared in this suspicion.

"Do you know anything about the pirates?" asked the man in surprised tones.

"We have come here to exterminate them," replied Jack.

"By Jove! You don't say! That's queer. Anyway, they plundered our craft, took us prisoners, and scuttled the ship. We discovered while aboard that they were intent upon finding some fabulous golden city underneath the Sargasso, and they subjected us to all sorts of cruelties, so that we resolved to escape. One night we managed to get out of the hold unseen, and finding that quarter boat towing astern, we got away in it."

"Five days ago?"

"Exactly. You can imagine our delight to meet you."

"But I was given to understand that the schooner was not a pirate, but merely attacked ships to drive them away, or to practice a wanton mischief they seemed possessed of," said Jack.

"Bosh!" said the sailor. "That's an error. They are real, downright pirates, and no mistake, although they seemed to be combining some diving with it."

"Here's proof enough," said Jack to Redyard, "that the goods we found on the Deer in Wrightstown were stolen from different ships, as I suspected, isn't it?"

"You are right," the diver replied; then he asked the sailor:

"What was the name of the piratical schooner's captain?"

"Simon Burk," the castaway replied.

"He was my first mate," commented Redyard, "and he is probably one of the most fiendish and inhuman brutes in existence."

"The mystery that formerly surrounded the ship of the Sargasso is a mystery no longer," remarked Jack. "It seems to me that the vessels that returned to port after being attacked were only the lucky few who managed to escape the ravages of those rascals, while the ones they attacked and captured never returned with their crews to tell the tale."

It relieved every one to at last understand the case on a practical and plausible basis.

"Do you know how many men there were on the Goblin Girl?" asked Jack. "I'd like to know something about the craft we are after, for it is my intention to blow her out of the water."

"We cannot give you any information beyond what we have told you," replied the sailor, shaking his head, "for as soon as we were captured we were stowed away below decks."

Jack was disappointed.

Just then Fritz announced that the meal was ready for them in the dining room, and they hastened away to eat it.

"What are you going to do with them?" queried Redyard.

"Put them aboard the first ship we meet," replied the boy.

"Have you noticed that craft beating about off there to the eastward?"

"No," replied Jack in surprise, "but since you have sighted her we will run over to her and give her these passengers."

The vessel was at least five miles away in the Sargasso, and when the Spitfire ran toward her, under Jack's direction, the efficacy of the knife blades on the ram was shown by the way they cut through the dense drift weed.

An ordinary vessel would have found it hard work to sail rapidly through the Sargasso, but it did not hinder the ram.

In half an hour they drew near the vessel, and saw it was a schooner.

Jack leveled a glass at her.

To his amazement, he observed that she was the Goblin Girl.

CHAPTER IX.

CAUGHT UNDER THE SEA.

"By heavens, boys, there's the ship we are after now!" cried Jack.

Tim, Fritz and Redyard dashed into the pilothouse, and peering out the windows, saw the big black schooner.

She stood luffed up in the wind, and her crew were crowded along the rail, gesturing toward the torpedo boat.

Our friends took one look at her, and then Tim closed the doors and windows, making everything secure against a possible encounter.

This had hardly been done when the castaways came filing in from the dining room and saw the ship.

"There she is now!" exclaimed their spokesman.

"She has been sailing toward us," Jack remarked, with a laugh, "and little suspected who we were."

"On the contrary," replied the castaway, "her captain knows all about your craft and who you are."

"Oh, yes! He had spies watching this man Redyard, I believe, so I presume he got posted in that way."

"Exactly so," the castaway answered. "I have got here," he added, withdrawing a revolver from his pocket, "a weapon which carries seven shots, and each one of my companions are armed in exactly the same way, do you see?"

"Small arms are of no use to us now," answered Jack.

"Each bullet in these pistols is as good as a man's life."

"Yes, so they are, in expert hands."

"Every one of us are dead shots."

"Are you?"

"And if you and your friends do not instantly hold up your hands in token of submission, we will kill you."

"What—us?" gasped Jack in startled tones.

"Yes—you!" emphatically replied the castaway.

And the next moment Jack and his friends found the twelve men all aiming their weapons at them!

"Treachery!" exclaimed Jack.

"Obey, or die!" sternly cried the man.

The demeanor of the whole crowd had now changed from their former unhappy bearing to an insolent air of harsh tyranny that was simply startling.

It was evident they had been acting a part.

"Explain this outrage!" exclaimed Jack hotly.

"I will. We sighted your craft before you saw our schooner."

"Ah! You are part of the schooner's crew?"

"We are. Agreeing upon the role we played, we took to one of the quarter boats, and sent the schooner flying away under full sail. You were so busy with us you failed to notice her."

"And now?"

"Realizing by your talk that you have overcome the man we went to abduct you, and are determined upon our de-

struction, we have circumvented your plans by a good strategic move, and have rendered you powerless at our mercy."

These words fell like a knell upon Jack's ears.

He glanced at his friends.

They all stood with pallid faces of chagrin, their hands raised up over their heads, and their enemies surrounding them.

Jack pulled two of the levers around on the switch-board, and the electric lights flared up while the pumps began to work.

"What are you doing there?" growled the man.

"If you value your life you won't interfere with me."

"The boat's sinkin'!" yelled one of the men, rushing for the door.

"Don't alarm yourself," said Jack. "You can't get out. This boat can navigate under water. Leave the door alone, you fool! It's caught with a spring lock."

A look of fear crossed the faces of the strangers, as the Spitfire buried herself forty-two feet under the surface before coming to a pause, and their leader yelled:

"Say, stop her! Send her to the surface!"

Jack did not lose his coolness for a moment, and a smile crossed his face, as he remarked:

"I turned the tables upon you!"

"Send the boat up, I tell you!" gasped the man.

He and his companions were not accustomed to going under the sea, and their situation alarmed them.

"Do you see those levers?" questioned Jack, imitating the manner the bearded man assumed, and he pointed out the switchboard, and the rascal replied:

"Yes. What of it?"

"If I turn one of them I can shut off the influx of air from the reservoirs, and every one of us will smother."

"Don't do that, on your life!"

"We might as well die of asphyxiation as by your pistol bullets, consequently we ain't afraid. There's one chance, though."

"What do you mean?"

"Drop your weapons, and surrender yourselves prisoners and I won't shut off the air; refuse, and we will all smother."

"Good heavens!"

"Choose!"

The man was in a quandary.

He had been certain of the ascendancy over Jack, and now found it difficult to submit to being coerced into defeat.

"I'll kill you and work the levers myself!" he yelled.

"Stand back! Take care! Touch them at your peril!" cried Jack warningly. "Turn the wrong one, and the boat might sink to the bed of the ocean, and get crushed to a pulp by the weight of the seas over her. Turn another, and you will charge the vessel with an electric current strong enough to roast us to death. You are in danger, man!"

Taking warning, the man paused in horror.

He saw that Jack had him.

"I'll show you that I am not trifling!" cried Jack.

He closed the air valve, and in a few minutes the atmosphere within the turret became so vitiated that they could hardly breathe.

"Don't murder us—I yield!" roared the man.

He turned to his men and told them that it were better to give in than to die like rats in a trap.

To this they all agreed and lowered their weapons, and Jack turned on the air supply again, kept his hand on the lever, and addressing Tim, he said:

"Take their weapons away from them and bind them all hand and foot. I shall retain my hold upon this lever, and at the first sign of revolt I'll cut off the air supply till we all perish. Remember, I'm desperate, and I'll employ desperate methods to win, or die."

The stern ring to the boy's tones convinced the men that he meant every word he uttered, and seeing that resistance was utterly useless, they dropped their weapons.

Fritz and Tim were experts at knot making, and securing strong lines they tied the men as Jack directed.

As soon as the men were secured so that escape was utterly impossible, they were secured separately to the walls of one of the rooms, and there were left to their fate.

"Victory!" exclaimed Jack delightedly.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" yelled his companions.

"What actors!" exclaimed Tim.

"Who would have thought they were deceiving us?" said Redyard.

"Donner vetter! Und I fix me dot peautiful subber!" groaned Fritz. "I sooner would to der picks haf gief it alretty."

"They certainly had a very cunningly arranged plan," said Jack. "It is very evident that they recognized us a great ways off, and expected to win on that deal, but they were defeated without much trouble after all."

They had cause to congratulate themselves, for the men they had overcome had them almost at their mercy when Jack's timely wit had saved them from ruination.

The boat then lay buried in the densest masses of drifting weed, through which it was impossible to see a yard ahead with any certainty, despite the intense penetrating glare of the searchlight.

Having discussed the situation for some time, the boy suddenly remembered the schooner upon the surface.

"Let us ascend to the top," he remarked. "The villains upon the Goblin Girl have seen us sink down and will doubtless suspect that their cunning plan to outwit us has failed. They will then very likely crack on all their canvas and try to get away before we get upon the surface again to go for them."

"Aye, lad, an' I warrant yer as it won't occupy much time ter get ther rest o' her crew whar our prisoners is," chuckled Tim, rolling his good eye knowingly.

Assured that he could easily overtake the schooner, Jack pulled the lever to start the pumps forcing the water ballast out of the boat.

But the pumps failed to respond.

Instead of operating, after several spasmodic throbs they ceased, and Jack hastily reversed the lever for fear of breaking them by their own motive power.

"There's something the matter!" exclaimed the boy.

"Don'd she would go ub?" queried Fritz, aghast.

"Not an inch! Run down and examine the machinery," replied Jack. "Confound the luck! Just when we want the boat to act promptly she fails and the schooner may escape."

"I hope we will get out of this alive," muttered Redyard.

CHAPTER X.

THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

The Dutch boy went down below and made a critical examination of the peculiar machinery, but found everything in first-class order, and then turned his attention to the pumps.

They were of the centrifugal type, which are best applied when raising large quantities of water through low lifts, and dispense with valves.

Within the casings were wheels that attained a rotary motion by connection with the engines, forming a whirlpool in the boxes, and as these boxes and the supply pipes were furnished with glass plates by which the interiors could be examined, Fritz glanced in.

He saw that they were completely choked up with sea weed.

In order to make them work properly, it was necessary to get this weed out and prevent the entrance of any more.

"Dot vos vun mistakes Shack made himselluf," muttered Fritz ruefully. "He oughter know dot de suction vhas carry in dot veeds in dose Sargasso Sea, und cover der mout' ouf dem pipes mit noddin alretty."

He called up to the boy, explaining the trouble, and Jack came down and saw how the pumps were choked.

"How dot be fixed now?" queried Fritz blankly.

"We must put caps over the supply pipes," said the boy, after a moment's consideration, "and when the pumps are cleaned out, we had better rivet screens over the mouths of the pipes outside."

"Den ve got to put on dose difing suits und go oursellufs oud on deck?"

"There is no other way to do it. You and I can fix it, Fritz."

They put on their diving suits of metal, with knapsacks on their backs, containing their air supply, and arming themselves with pneumatic pistols and spring knives of Jack's invention, they took what tools and articles they needed, told their companions what they intended doing, and passed into the end compartment.

The chamber was divided in two.

Closing their visors, they turned on their air valves, and started the electric lights in the lamps that were fastened on top of their helmets, the currents of which came from electric batteries they had inside of their air reservoirs.

The chamber they occupied was lit up by electric lights, as they were the only kind that will burn under water.

Then passing through a water-tight door into the other half of the compartment, Jack pulled a lever, and water was let into the room from the sea, filling it up.

As soon as this was done, the sea door was opened and they stepped out on deck among the water, weeds and fishes.

They had a code of signals arranged in the deaf and dumb alphabet for conversing, and thereby were enabled to converse.

Fritz had a rope with him, and tying one end of it to the railing, he made a slip-noose in the other end, which Jack fastened around his waist.

The Dutch boy then lowered the young inventor over the side until Jack arrived opposite the pump holes, when he signaled his companion to stop his descent.

Having a bag slung over his shoulder containing all he needed for the work, Jack began his task and capped the mouth of the pump tubes.

Fritz then went over to the pilot-house window, where Tim was standing inside, and there found a press-button.

It was attached to an electric bell, and by pressing the button and ringing the bell like a telegraphic alphabet the Dutch boy spelled out the sentence to Tim of:

"Go down, open pumps, clean them out and fasten them up again."

The old sailor nodded assent, and went away.

In half an hour he returned, and signaled that he had complied, whereupon Fritz returned and signaled to Jack that it was done.

The boy then uncapped the tubes and boring holes.

He riveted the screens over them to keep out the weed, while Tim clinched the rivets on the inside.

Having completed one side, Jack climbed up the rope to the deck and fixed the other side in the same way.

The boat was then in good working order.

Fritz stood at the rail waiting for Jack to signal him to haul up, but the time passed by and no signal came.

An hour went by and still no signal came. The Dutch boy became restless and impatient. "I'll pull him up, anyway," muttered Fritz. He seized the rope and gave it a tug. To his amazement, it was so light that he knew in a moment that Jack was not on the end of it. How had the boy become detached from it? Where had he so mysteriously disappeared to? Dismayed and nervous, Fritz drew the rope all up, and peering through his glass visor at the end of it, he saw that the rope had been severed with a knife.

Jack must have fallen down into the abyss below. A thrill of horror passed over Fritz. What was the depth under the boat? Perhaps 12,000 feet, as they were close upon what is charted the Grassy Sea middle ground, forming an immense valley.

At such a fearful depth with the enormous water pressure there might be pressing on the bottom, if Jack had gone to the sea's bed he would die in a few minutes.

His body would be crushed as if by a hydraulic machine. Fritz realized this.

He rushed into the water chamber and closed the door, turned a lever on the wall, and the pumps emptied the room of the water it contained.

Then he opened the other door, passed through, closed it, and opening his visor he rushed into the boat's rooms.

"Shack's lost!" he yelled frantically.

"Holy Moses!" roared Tim. "Wot's ther matter?"

"He trop off ouf der line."

"Lordy! Lordy! Down enter ther sea?"

"Where else he could trop, you bick fools?"

"Thunderation! How deep is it here?"

"Ve don't vhas got der soundings."

"Then down goes ther ram arter him."

And so saying Tim stumped hastily into the pilot-house, and starting the pumps, which now worked properly, he took in more water, and the Spitfire began to sink.

Down, down she went through the dense weeds towards the bottom as gallons of water poured into her ballast chamber, and she finally attained a depth of thirty feet further when Fritz, who was peering out the window, yelled:

"Stob her, Tim!"

"Wot now?" queried the sailor.

"Dere is a bick ridge below us."

"Aye, now I see it."

Tim pushed back the lever and the boat paused.

At this depth she had gotten below the floating weeds, and was in clear, dark water, through which her searchlight cut like a knife, showing their surroundings.

The drift floated like a cloud above them.

Below there was a long ridge of sand and stone which extended in a line for a long distance east and west.

The form of the bottom of the ocean resembles that of the land, being made up of valleys, mountains, plateaus, ridges, plains, hills, encarpments and other figures.

The Atlantic cable was laid across the submarine table land to which they now descended, and as the boat floated a few feet above it, they saw that it was covered with aquatic plants of all kinds.

It now became apparent that if Jack had fallen upon this ridge he had not far to descend.

Buoyed up by the air in his knapsack, he would have descended much easier and slower than if he had fallen through the air, and had very likely landed uninjured.

But where?

They began to search for him.

"He couldn't a-been hurt, arter all," said Tim.

"Ach, gracious! Ain't dot lucky? I t'ought he go down a t'ousand feets."

"Did ther boat sink wvertical?"

"Yust a leedle bit dot way."

"Then we will ha' ter drift aroun' fer him."

"Mebbe he see dose lightses."

"He will, if he's anywhar near."

Around went the Spitfire under easy power, describing tortuous windings and numerous circles, the Dutch boy and Redyard posted at the windows on either side, keeping an eager lookout for the boy.

They covered every foot of the ground in a radius of half a mile, and saw no sign of the missing boy.

A long chain of vegetation lay in the boat's way, and Tim drove her straight towards it.

Her ram-blades struck it, and there came a strong resistance, and then a terrific shock, as the keen knives cut it in two.

A cry of alarm pealed from Fritz.

"Ach, Gott! Vot you do?" he cried to Tim. "Do yer see id?"

"What now?" demanded the old sailor in dismay.

"You have cut the Atlantic cable in two," exclaimed Redyard.

It was a fact, for the long chain of vegetation covered the great telegraph line, and they had severed it.

CHAPTER XI.

DISCOVERED AT LAST.

The Spitfire came to a pause and settled down upon the ridge beside the Atlantic cable, which her ram had severed.

There laid the great cable, like some monster sea serpent, covered with barnacles and vegetation, above the water was dark with the clouds of the floating seaweed, and around them a strange scene.

Since the pumps had been cleaned and their feed pipe mouths were covered with netting to keep out the weeds, they worked all right.

Fritz yet had on his diving suit.

"Shack down dis ridge must haf fallen," he exclaimed. "Dot don't vhas more as dirty-two feetses fall, anyhow, so efen if ve didn'd vhas found him in our searches puddy gwick, I am so sure as never vhas dot he down here somewhere iss alretty."

"It is evident he didn't fall into the valley," said Redyard, the diver, "and such a fall as he had couldn't have hurt him."

"Aye, but where is he?" muttered Tim. "Wot cut ther line wot he wuz a-hangin' ter? It looked as if a knife done it?"

No one could answer this question.

They could not go to the surface until they found Jack, even if the ship of the Sargasso escaped them overhead.

The dozen imprisoned castaways in the other room were frightened over their position buried under the sea, and were loudly clamoring.

But the three in the pilot-house paid no heed to them.

The afternoon sun was declining, but at the depth the torpedo ram then lay, the sun's rays made no difference.

"I go me ondt," said Fritz, "und see vetter dot gable can be rebaired vonet; ve don't could leaf it dis vay."

"Wait!" said Redyard, as his glance fell upon a telegraph key sounder and relay upon a board that stood upon a shelf. "I've got a plan to propose to you."

"Vell?" queried Fritz, pausing.

"If you will make a joint between the broken ends of the

cable and bring me a wire in here, as I understand how to operate an instrument, I will sent a message to the United States, explaining the cause of the trouble."

The rest were delighted with this proposal, for if they could not repair the cable themselves they could show the owners of it where the break was located.

Fritz produced some tools and copper wire.

He then went out and made a joint, which made a complete circuit again, and then secured the wire to a stationary binding post upon the outside of the boat's hull.

From this post, on the inside, the diver strung two wires to the instrument and at once called up an operator.

The reply came from New Foundland.

"The cable is broken," telegraphed Redyard.

"Yes, so we have found," came the reply. "Who are you?"

"Crew of the submarine boat, Spitfire. We are under the sea."

"How strange! Where are you located?"

Redyard gave their latitude and longitude, and then added:

"We will endeavor to repair the cable and buoy the spot."

"Do so by all means, so we can afterwards examine it."

"Don't cut the cable out; we may speak to you soon."

"It has caused a serious delay in our business."

"If possible, we will join all the wires and insulate the point within an hour. Then we'll send up a buoy painted white—a keg."

"Anchor it to the spot so it won't drift."

"We will secure it to the cable."

"How came the cable to break?"

Redyard did not choose to answer this question for very obvious reasons, and replied evasively:

"I cannot tell you. We will do all we can for you."

"It will be greatly appreciated," came the reply. Fritz now came in, and when Redyard explained what the dialogue consisted of, he said:

"I oxamine me dot gables, und I tink me dot I can fix it."

He procured everything needful, and going out again, he set to work, and in half an hour had a good joint made.

It was tested by the operators on both continents, and found to be as good as ever.

Then the Dutch boy bound a heavy insulation of rubber around it, and taking a white keg, he fastened a wire line to it, and as it was air-tight, it ascended through the weeds to the top of the sea.

He fastened the other end of the line to the cable, so the telegraph people would know just where to look for the break, and then went upon the deck and detached the wire from the binding post.

Signaling that it was all right, he added to Tim:

"You can start the boat."

"Ain't you coming in?" asked the sailor.

"No. I'll stay out on deck for a while," answered Fritz.

"All right. Look out for yourself."

Tim raised the boat a few feet, and she glided away through the waving green plants, the dark gray mollusks and countless fishes of all sizes and kinds.

Her search for Jack was resumed.

Around and around she went in all directions, and Tim turned to the diver and said in troubled tones:

"With them 'ere dozen men wot we captured a-tryin' ter fool us on board our supply o' air 'll soon give out 'cause they're consumin' it all ther time. Ye see, we calkerlates as thar's jist so many cubic feet o' atmosphere compressed 'ter our reserv'y ter last four men a certain length o' time. Now, when thar's a dozen extree, why, ther air gits used up quicker, an' ther length o' time we kin stay submerged is shortened in perportion."

"That's so."

Tim glanced at the air-gauge speculatively.

"I don't reckon as ther supply as we've got on han' 'll do us more'n two hours longer," said he, "an' if we don't find Jack in that 'ere space o' time, why, we'll ha' ter go aloft ter git in a new supply, d'yer see?"

"How long will Jack's supply in his knapsack last him?"

"We calkerlates on five hours."

"Three have passed since he disappeared."

"Aye, an' he's only got two hours' breathin' spell left."

"That's bad! He will smother if we don't find him soon."

"Sure! That's just wot's a-skeerin' me now."

The diver detached the telegraph instrument from the wall, and replaced it on the shelf from which he got it, while Tim continued to steer the boat around.

"'Tain't often as a feller kin hold his breath half an hour," said Tim reflectively, "yet I've seen it did longer'n that under water. Aye—I've seen a man not breathe fer hours—"

"Hold on! Hold on, there!" interposed Redyard. "If you are going to lie, don't try to stuff a diver like me with any such yarns as that, Tim, for I know how long a man can live without breathing under water, as I've had years of experience in the business, and ain't to be fooled."

"Avast thar, my hearty," said Tim coolly. "I ain't a-tellin' no lies at all. I tell yer I've seen men under water wot didn't breathe in hours, an'——"

"I'll teach this old liar a lesson!" muttered Redyard, in exasperation. "Stop!" he added, as he pulled a roll of bills from his pocket, and waved them under Tim's nose. "I can stand a lie that I don't understand, but I'll willing to bet you this wad against a dollar bill that no man can hold his breath more than five minutes."

"I hates ter see yer a-losin' yer money, my hearty," said Tim, as he fished a dollar out and slapped it down on the table, "but I'll go yer if I git busted. How much have yer?"

"Just fifty dollars."

"Plant it whar I kin reach it."

"All right. Now prove it."

And so saying Redyard laid his money down on Tim's.

"Ther man I seen holdin' his breath fer hours wuz dead," said Tim, with a broad grin, as he grabbed the stakes.

"Sold!" gasped Redyard, in disgust. "I thought you was going to make up a big lie, as you generally do."

"Ain't I won?"

"The money is yours."

"I reckon as yer won't doubt my yarns so much in the future now," chuckled Tim, as he pocketed the money and took a chew.

"You're a regular old swindler!" growled the diver.

Just then there came a terrific thump against the window, and they looked up in surprise, and saw Fritz standing there glaring in at them through his visor and making excited gestures.

The next instant he spelled out with the bell signal:

"I see Jack!"

"Where?" queried Tim alertly, with his fingers.

"Off to the port side. Look!"

The Dutch boy pointed away to the left, and the two followed with their glances the direction he indicated.

"Jerusalem, the golden!" gasped Tim in alarm.

"His life is in danger! Go to his assistance!" cried Redyard.

And they had good cause for their dismay.

About fifty yards away stood the boy inventor, fiercely struggling for his life in the writhing arms of an immense calmar.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RUNAWAY RAM.

Jack stood in the midst of a dense submarine jungle in the rays of the searchlight, clad in his glittering diving suit, and wielding a spring knife against the calmar.

This monster of the deep was much larger than a devil fish, having an elongated body with serpent-like arms surrounding its horrible head, which were writhing about Jack's body.

Upon seeing Jack's danger Fritz sprang from the deck of the ram to the sandy ground and rushed toward the imperiled boy.

After a search of nearly four hours for him his friends did not intend to see him killed when they found him.

By this time night had settled upon the sea, and the ship ravaging those waters had evidently disappeared long ago, leaving twelve of her number prisoners on the Spitfire.

Our friends had no time to lose.

Their air supply was fast becoming exhausted.

"It's Jack, sure enough!" said Roger Redyard.

"Thar goes Fritz to his aid!" muttered Tim, stopping the boat.

The Dutch boy soon reached his friend, armed with a knife, and fearlessly attacked the calmar.

Finding another foe to contend with, the fish flung one of its tentacles toward the Dutch boy, and the cup-like sucker at the end fastened itself to Fritz's armor.

A coil of the writhing arm was twisted around the boy's neck, and with both boys clutched in a tight embrace, the monster suddenly started away.

Nearby there was a rocky cavern, into which it dragged them, both boys making the most desperate efforts to liberate themselves from its clutches.

Jack's arms had been bound by the wrapping feeler of the creature, but he now tore himself loose.

With one slash of his knife he gashed off the tentacle that held him and recoiled several paces.

By that time the calmar had drawn Fritz up to its jelly-like body when the Dutch boy began to hack it with his knife, cutting it to pieces.

Spasmodically recoiling, the calmar got back in the farthest extremity of the cavern, and there began to twist and squirm with pain, its long arms dashing through the water wildly as it rolled about on the ground.

Jack grasped Fritz by the arm and started to leave the cavern with him, when suddenly they felt a terrific commotion.

It was as if a powerful current of the water had swept into the cavern, for they were sent reeling back with the most violent force, and were slammed against the wall.

A moment afterwards a mass of sand, swept up from the bottom of the sea, came gushing through the entrance of the cavern, and while much of it poured inside, the rest effectually choked up the opening.

The two boys were thus unexpectedly fastened into the place with the calmar, which now had come to a pause and had fastened its sullen eyes upon them in one corner.

As soon as they recovered themselves they saw how they were situated, and Jack spelled with his fingers:

"We are badly fastened in now."

"Can't we dig our way out?" answered Fritz in the same way.

"Yes, if this beast don't kill us first."

"Look out! It's coming for us now."

The calmar was slowly creeping toward them, and the two boys saw that it had determined to attack them.

It was a most vengeful creature.

Jack and Fritz prepared their knives for use.

These weapons were made so that the blades were buried in the handles; but upon being released, by touching a spring, they could be made to fly out with great rapidity.

Thus the resistance of the water against an arm making a blow was overcome, and the same result attained.

Jack now went off to the left, and Fritz to the right, with the calmar between them, and the creature paused as if undecided which one of the two to attack.

Neither of the two boys removed their glance from it.

Presently it fixed upon Jack for its victim, and with a swift motion it started for him, when Fritz rushed for it.

This seemed to divert its attention.

Both boys then attacked it with cyclonic vim, and it took fright and attempted to retreat, but ere it had gone ten yards they killed it, and left it mangled on the ground.

"He is beyond doing any harm now!" motioned Jack.

"Then let's get out of here," responded Fritz.

They then attacked the choked opening, and began to dig the sand away with their hands, but it occupied fully an hour to bore their way out.

Upon escaping from the cave, the first thing they saw were the lights of the Spitfire, and then they observed the figures of Tim and Redyard, clad in diving suits, moving around as if in search of them.

Hastening toward the anxious couple, they met.

Great was the sailor and diver's delight to see them safe, for they feared that some serious accident had befallen them, as they had been missing from sight for so long.

"How did your line get cut, anyway?" asked Fritz, in the deaf and dumb alphabet. "We gave you up for lost."

"When I finished cleaning the pump feed pipes, and putting the netting over them," motioned Jack, explanatorily. "I was attacked by a stinging ray, and drawing my knife I made a pass at it, and the edge of the blade gashed my support rope, severed it, and down I fell."

"Was you injured?" spelled Redyard.

"Not in the least," replied Jack.

They started back for the Spitfire, and when they arrived in front of the pilot-house they saw through the glass windows that Whiskers and Bismarck were fighting.

The monkey was chasing the parrot around the room as fast as it could go, when Bismarck suddenly flew on the wheel and alighted on the rim.

Whiskers was not to be cheated out of his prey, however, for he made a flying leap from a chair, and just as his outstretched paws were ready to fasten upon the bird, Bismarck fluttered his wings and flew away.

The bird landed upon the handle of one of the levers on the switchboard with such a shock that the lever was turned.

It started the big wheel at full speed.

The boat was then floating within a few feet of the bottom, and had just room enough to clear it.

Away dashed the boat like a racehorse.

"Good heavens!" muttered Jack. "There is no one aboard to hold her."

He rushed for the Spitfire and missed her.

For a moment it seemed as if she would get away, and the rest stood watching her, half paralyzed with surprise.

Just as she slipped from Jack's hand, however, a rope became uncoiled, and streaming out from her deck, Jack made a leap for it.

He caught it.

The rope slipped through his fingers rapidly, but he tightened his grip, and it jerked him from his feet, when he was dragged along the ground after the boat.

In this manner the Spitfire and the boy disappeared in

the gloom ahead, leaving Tim, Fritz and Redyard standing glaring after them in utter astonishment.

Several minutes passed by before they recovered.

Then they turned excitedly toward each other, and Tim motioned!

"The boat has gone over the ridge into the valley, with Jack hanging onto the end of the rope."

"Should he fall, or the rope become detached, he is lost," spelled Redyard, "and we can't do anything to help him."

"It's lucky that he caught the line at all," motioned Fritz. "If he succeeds in getting aboard of the boat, he may be able to save her from loss or destruction."

"The parrot started her, didn't it?" queried Tim.

"Alighted on the lever after the monkey chased it," answered Fritz.

"What a strange accident!" remarked the diver.

"We are left in a dangerous plight now," Tim spelled.

"Should we move away from here, it will make matters ten times worse," said the diver, "for if Jack recovers the boat, he will try to find us, and our combined lights will make a better beacon for him to guide himself by than they would be were we separated."

"Remember," cautioned Fritz, "that we have only got enough air in our reservoirs and aboard of the boat to last about an hour longer. If the supply gives out before Jack's return, both he and we will perish."

This startling reminder of their danger staring them in the face made them all shudder and feel uncomfortable, and they began to speculate over the boy's chances of getting the boat and finding them in that intense gloom.

There were very slim chances of them coming out of their trouble alive, and they knew it, too.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SUNKEN CITY OF THE ATLANTIC.

Clinging to the trailing rope, and dragged along over the ground after the runaway boat, Jack suddenly saw the Spitfire go flying from the plateau, and float away over the ocean valley.

Down he sank, hanging far below the boat, as he was drawn swiftly along after it, and peering down he could see nothing but intense gloom.

There were miles of depth below him.

Were he to relax his grip and fall, he would not survive five minutes, and a shudder convulsed him as he thought of it.

"The sooner I get aboard the boat, the better," he thought, and he thereupon began to work his way, hand over hand, toward it, with the greatest difficulty, for the flight of the boat put an immense pressure against him.

He finally reached the deck.

Grasping the rail, and pulling himself aboard, he rushed to the sea-door, and gained the interior of the boat.

Whiskers and Bismarck lay in separate corners of the cabin, exhausted from their fight.

The boy shook his finger at them for causing all this mischief, and hastening into the pilot-house, he stopped the flight of the boat, and took off his diving suit.

Jack observed that the Spitfire had been traveling in almost a straight line from the plateau, and observing by the compass that the bow pointed due south, he started her for the north.

In a short space of time the ridge came in sight, and after brief search he found his friends, who came aboard.

The boy then sent the boat to the surface.

Nothing was to be seen of the Goblin Girl.

Her crew had taken advantage of the submersion of the Spitfire to make her escape, and now nothing but miles upon miles of weed-grown sea met their gaze.

"Our quest for that schooner has only just begun," said Jack. "If we fall in with her two consorts we will know them by their close resemblance to this one we just lost. Nothing can be done now, boys, so we may as well divide the watch and turn in."

The suggestion was followed.

On the following morning the boat was far into the grassy sea, and there was not a sail in sight anywhere.

After breakfast Redyard remarked:

"As near as I can judge by our location now, we must be as near to the sunken city as we can get, and I propose that we make a descent and examine the place."

"I am satisfied to go down," replied Jack.

"To what depth can the boat descend?"

"Five hundred feet in safety."

"That's more than twice the necessary distance."

"Get everything ready, boys."

As soon as the boat was prepared for her dive, Redyard asked:

"Is it possible to leave the boat at a great depth, Wright?"

"We can travel around in the diving-suits with impunity at three hundred feet."

"That is twice the depth a man can go in an ordinary suit."

"You must remember how my suits are made of metal, and braced inside to resist the pressure, whereas the ordinary suits consist of mere rubber with copper helmets, which don't protect your heart, lungs and kidneys from the pressure. Moreover, the mode of respiration I use is far superior to the old-fashioned pumps and tubes. In a word, Redyard, the sensation at a great depth in one of my suits is much the same as if you was in an ordinary diving-bell. You will soon find this out."

The boat then descended through the weed.

It was here denser than on the margin of the Sargasso, for it was filled with all sorts of floating debris.

Upon penetrating a depth of seventy feet the boat passed into clear water, and a white glare came up from the bottom.

This was the effect of the sand.

Down, down she went still further, and Jack kept his glance fixed intently upon the registers.

When they marked 180 feet he glanced out and saw the bottom.

A cry of astonishment escaped his lips.

"Look! Look!" he exclaimed excitedly, as he pointed out the window. "There lies the sunken city of the Atlantic!"

Every one came crowding around, and eagerly peered out.

The boat was hovering over a spectral city.

Below her there arose in the glare of the electric lights the shadowy towers, domes, spires and minarets of a city that lay half buried in a mass of sand.

There were hundreds of houses and other buildings of a peculiar style of architecture not unlike that of ancient Egypt.

All these edifices were constructed of stone and a mortar upon which the sea did not seem to have any visible effect.

The great carved columns, handsome cornices, and massive masonry were garnished with metal arabesques, plaques and embossed reliefs which the water had corroded, but the experienced eyes of Jack told him that they were made of solid gold.

The boat descended into the middle of what seemed to be a great public square surrounded by the largest and handsomest of the houses, and came to a pause between four great obelisks of stone covered with strange hieroglyphics.

Millions of fishes of all kinds were the only living inhabitants of this weird city, and they went in and out of the doors and windows of the houses, over the roofs and through the wide streets at will.

Every one on the Spitfire was astonished.

"Strange, wonderful, beautiful!" cried Jack.

"Thar's millions in gold here!" Tim muttered.

"Hully Chee!" gasped Fritz. "Vot vill ve do mit all dot gold?"

"You see that my story has foundation in fact," said Redyard.

"And you saw this wonderful city before?"

"Aye, but at a distance. I dared not venture nearer."

"There is every token here of a high civilization having existed, although the period is remote when this strange ocean isle flourished above the Atlantic."

"They were a wonderful race, according to the record my ancestor left," assented the diver, "and here is abundant evidence of such being the case."

"You will find a peculiarity among the most isolated and savage tribes," said Jack. "If they have access to precious stones or metals their instinct invariably causes them to make ornaments of them. I have seen evidences of this among other nations."

"If the crews of the schooners have fished up any of these treasures," replied the diver, "their efforts have been so wonderfully rewarded that I do not wonder at their desperate boldness at remaining here in the face of every danger that threatens them. But what are we to do now?"

"Venture out and explore the place."

"With all my heart."

"Tim, you can go along, but Fritz had better remain to guard the boat. She lies in a good position. It seems to be the center of the city, so she may as well remain here."

The Dutch boy was disappointed at being obliged to remain behind, and Tim was delighted to go out.

Donning their diving suits, they left the Spitfire.

Myriads of fish and plants abounded on all sides, the most unexpected forms appeared—there, apparently a plant, forming a miniature tree growing on a wall, its branches verdureless, yet strangely enough, flowers of the most brilliant colors sprang from their extremities.

There was a motion to the petals, causing a tiny current flowing toward them, when the minute creatures drifted in it, and they floated into the mouths of the zoantharia, or animal flower, serving it for food.

"Look!" gasped Jack, recoiling for an instant.

Two hideous eyes were sparkling in the sandy bottom at him.

It was a living form, like a huge leaf, which detached itself from the ground and undulatingly arose, after stirring up around itself a cloud of sand. It was merely a turbot—white on one side of its flat body and greenish-brown on the other. It had, at an alarm, hidden itself from an approaching enemy.

The three divers approached an open door in the nearest building.

Within the entrance there seemed to be a bundle of serpents in violent agitation, twining and writhing, and then suddenly launching themselves out precipitately at a creature with a beak and glaring eyes.

The serpent-like mass was a cuttle-fish.

The hideous monster rushed towards it, and a fight seemed probable.

But no! The cuttle-fish vomited a black poison, fogging the water all around, and its enemy swam away.

The approach of the divers sent the devil-fish off in the opposite direction, and Jack passed through the door, followed by the rest, their helmet lanterns blazing.

He found himself within a vast hallway, and thence he

turned to the right, passed through a door, and entered a huge room.

It had once been a banqueting hall, for it contained a metal table and chairs, covered with dishes of gold and pottery, buried in sand.

Around this table there were strewn the grinning skulls and white bones of scores of people who had occupied the room at the time the island sank beneath the sea.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BALL OF GOLD.

Jack led the way through the grim death chamber, sunk knee-deep in the yielding sand, his friends following after.

Across the great hall was another mighty chamber, which was utterly devoid of furniture, but contained a great altar of solid metal, upon which there rested an immense globe of the same material.

Jack examined this strange object closely.

He then turned to his friends and spelled with his fingers:

"The people of this city must have been sun worshipers."

"You are right," answered Redyard. "The paper I found said so."

"And is this the figger head they prayed to?" spelled Tim.

He pointed at the great globe, and Jack nodded affirmatively.

"It is, apparently, solid gold," spelled the boy.

"Let's get it aboard the boat," replied Tim.

They pushed and rolled it from the pedestal to the floor, its fall making an abrasion by which they saw that it was solid gold.

It was fully three feet in diameter, and so heavy that it took the four to roll it across the floor through the sand.

After a hard tussle they managed to get the ball beside the boat, when tackles were rigged, and it was hoisted on board and stowed away.

"It must have weighed five hundred pounds," said Jack, later, in the cabin.

"Should we get to civilization," remarked Tim, opening the visor of his helmet, "thar's a fortune in it fer each on us. I reckerlect when I wuz in ther navy, durin' a ingagement, our cannon balls gave out, and everything else wot we could load in a gun. Ther enemy's ship wuz approachin' all o' her guns dismantled. One shot from our guns 'd give us ther battle. Whar ter git shot fer ther gun we didnt know."

"Is this one of your yarns?" demanded Redyard severely.

"Lord, no; yer kin read the account in any history o' ther war," replied Tim. "Thar stood our craft, ter contain my story, an' no one knowed wot ter do till a idee struck me. I went among all ther osslfers an' crew, an' ast 'em fer thar gold an' silver watches an' chains. Then I rammed 'em in ther gun, an' fired it. Ther heat o' ther powder melted them 'ere tmepleeces an' thar chains as they left ther muzzle, an' ther rotary motion they had from gittin' fired formed 'em into a big cannon ball, wot struck ther enemy's wessel, an' stove a hole in her hull. She filled up an' sunk, an'——"

But Tim stopped short in the middle of his narrative as he suddenly found himself without an audience.

The formation of the cannon ball was too much for them.

Seeing that they had left the Spitfire, the old sailor muttered his anger and stumped out after them as fast as he could go.

Jack returned to the building from whence they had taken the ball of gold, and began to explore the rest of the building.

Most of the houses were but one story high, but each one was spread out over a large tract of ground.

The divers passed from the hall into a large apartment, at one end of which was raised dais under a large canopy, with a settee of curious workmanship standing upon it.

Ranged in rows in front of it were numerous metal benches, from which they inferred that the place had once been the council room of the natives who had inhabited this place.

Jack pointed at the chair on the dais.

"It is gold!" he spelled.

"Shall I take it to the boat?" queried Redyard.

"Yes—if you can carry it."

The diver made the attempt, but could not lift it.

Tim went to his assistance, however, and between the two they carried it slowly and laboriously from the building.

"It must have been the throne of the ruler of this place," muttered Jack, as he walked ahead alone.

The boy passed into a large armory, the walls of which were hung with various kinds of strange-looking weapons, and going out into the large courtyard he came upon a number of immense skeletons strewn among the sand.

They bore a close resemblance to the remains of elephants, but of this Jack was not sure, as he could not understand how the aborigines of this isolated island could transport such enormous creatures from the mainland.

A large, arched doorway gave Jack egress to the street, and he went out and passed through a wide avenue.

It was lined by rows of enormous trees, which long ago had died, leaving their sentinel like trunks standing so decayed that but slight exertion was required to break them and push them over.

Each side of the street was lined by quaint-looking stone houses, with enormous doors and windows, but in nearly every instance the roofs were gone.

This was evidently due to the action of the water, as there was not a remnant of woodwork to be found in any of the interiors, doors or windows.

It was impossible to distinguish much, as there was such a large quantity of sand covering everything.

Jack saw, however, that the wealth of the place was very much exaggerated, as only the finest houses had any of the golden ornamentations, and as there were not a great many of these, it was fair to presume that the precious metal had only been used by the chief dignitaries of the city.

Not one of the poorer class of houses was thus embellished.

He followed the street he was in for some distance, and found that the city was laid out in perfect angles.

In some places the houses were totally ruined, as if the place had been riven by an earthquake.

There were houses wrecked and flung to the ground, others were split in fragments, leaving a portion of their walls standing; the fronts, sides or backs were knocked out of not a few, and in places only a few slimy stones remained to show that houses had existed there.

Unlike other sunken cities which Jack had seen during his other voyages under the sea, this one was not surrounded by a wall, for when he reached the end of the street, he saw what might once have been a dense timber land stretching away before him.

The boy retraced his steps.

It was evident that his boat had descended in the middle of the settlement, and right in the midst of the principal buildings of the place.

If they were to gather any treasure from the sunken city, it must be done at the place where they alighted.

He saw the brilliant lights of the Spitfire gleaming straight ahead in the distance, and hastened toward them.

But half way of the distance back had been covered when out from a huge doorway beside the boy there glided a small, white body of a whitish color.

It was followed by half a dozen more immense fishes, and the boy saw that the forerunner was a pilot-fish, while the ones in pursuit were great white sharks.

These monsters measured over thirty feet in length, their bodies being grayish-brown above and whitish below.

Furnished with ten rows of teeth in their huge mouths, and being of a bold, ravenous disposition, these white sharks were well known to be the most dreaded cannibals in the vast depths of the sea, as they were capable of easily devouring a full-grown man!

Jack had frequently seen angel-fish, hammer-heads, sail-fish, fox sharks, and blue, basking and Greenland sharks, but he had never before encountered one of the white tribe.

That these were the worst and largest of all there could be no doubt, and a shudder passed over him when he saw the tiny pilot-fish lead them toward him.

It might have been bad enough to encounter one of them at a time, but when it came to half a dozen, the young inventor wished he was safe inside the Spitfire.

He was armed with a knife and pistol.

The sharks saw him at once, and fastened their oblique, glassy eyes upon him with a look that boded him no good.

The next moment they all made a dash for Jack.

He saw them coming for him on all sides, and observed them roll over upon their backs, as their mouths were under their projecting snouts, and they had to turn thus in order to get hold of him with their teeth.

Down dropped the boy flat on his back.

He acted so promptly that the monsters missed him, and he saw their jaws come together with a terrible snap.

Over his prostrate figure they shot with lightning speed, gilding away in all directions again.

With great rapidity Jack drew his pneumatic pistol, and aiming it at the leviathans, he fired.

They had gathered in a group around him again.

There came a thud and a swish as the ball shot toward them, and the next moment the bullet struck one of the sharks and exploded within its body.

A large chunk of flesh was torn from its belly, and a stream of blood flowing from the wound began to rapidly dye the surrounding water crimson.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STRANGE DIVER.

Redyard and Tim carried the golden chair aboard of the submarine boat, and stowed it away, when they heard the voice of the Dutch boy yell frantically:

"Hey, vellers! Hey, vellers!"

"What's gone wrong?" shouted Redyard, whose visor was open.

"Shiminey Christmas! Coom here vunct!"

"He's in trouble!" exclaimed the diver.

Both he and Tim hastened up forward into the pilot-house. Fritz stood by the window glaring out at the boat's prow.

"Lordy, wot ails yer, anyway?" demanded the old sailor.

"Ach, vot you gall dot tings by der outside?" queried Fritz, pointing through the window. "I vhas shtood me here effer since you vented away, und I see me dot ting down troo der vater coom like dot sea-serbends alretty, und dere it go mit funniest motions undil it reach idselluf dot poat, vhen she stob herselluf, und keep a hoistin' und a-jerkin' und if she avay don't go puddy gwick, she der poat vill ubset vonct."

Tim and Redyard glanced out the window.

A long black object had come down through the water at

the end of the ram, where it was then caught in the muzzle of the pneumatic tube.

"It's ther sea serpent, by golly!" ejaculated Tim.

"Nonsense!" replied the diver. "There's no such thing!"

"Yes, there is!" averred Tim stoutly. "Thar's them in this 'ere world as don't sot no belief on them 'ere things, but as secin's believin', I oughter know something about it."

"Do you mean to say that you have seen the sea serpent?"

"Aye, now, an' not so many years ago, neither."

"I don't believe it, unless you were drunk and saw snakes."

"Will ye let me convince yer?"

"Drive ahead—I'll defy you to do it, though."

"Donner wetter!" growled Fritz. "Vhy some addenshuns you don'd bay to dot ding oudt by der endt ouf der poat alretty?"

"Don't worry about that," replied the diver. "It will keep. I know what it is. Now prove your story, Tim!"

The old sailor nodded, and began:

"I wuz sailin' in ther Chiny Sea, an' ther moon arose, when ther lookout reported as thar wuz a bar'l o' apples a-floatin' athwart our course. A minute arterwards we saw as it wuz ther head o' a big sarpint, wot had its body sunken. I offered ter kill it, an' rowed out to ther lubber alone, as every one was a-skeered ter go, armed wi' a axe. When I reached it, the blamed thing hissed and spit at me, but I up wi' my gun an' fired at it, plunkin' it atween ther eyes. It dove down an came up ag'in. Then I fired a second shot."

"You just said you was only armed with an ax," said Redyard.

"Aye, but I found a rifle in ther boat. Didn't explain that."

"No, you didn't."

"Waal, that's jist how it happened. Ther second shot made ther sarpint squirm, an' it flung one o' its folds aroun' me, pulled me out o' ther boat, an' began ter squeeze ther life out o' my body. I'd a-died only fer one thing."

"What saved you?" sarcastically asked Redyard.

"I took a saw, and began to cut off its head," replied Tim blandly. "It's backbone wuz so tough, though, all the teeth in ther saw wuz broken, so I took ther back o' ther saw, an' strappin' it on my boat, I put an edge on it, an'——"

"Killed it, eh?" demanded the diver. "If you didn't you should have picked up an ax and done it, for the sea is full of carpenter's tools, and there was nothing to hinder you. My dear Tim, I don't doubt your story in the least."

"Why don't yer?" queried the old sailor. "Yer never do believe me."

"The reason I believe you is because I saw you kill that snake myself. In fact, I've got its skin stuffed now, and carry it in my watch-chain pocket. But, come, let's suspend our talk a few moments, and stop this shaking."

Tim glared at him in silence a moment, not knowing what to say, and the diver asked him:

"Can you fire the pneumatic gun?"

"Aye, aye," replied Tim, recovering himself by an effort.

"Then load her up and blaze away, as I want to see if we can knock the head off this sea serpent."

The boat was bobbing and shaking violently, and the old sailor put a projectile in the gun, locked the breech up, and opened the water-valve.

He then discharged it by pulling the lever.

There came a shock, and a recoil, and they saw the dark object ahead, with the end blown off, suddenly begin to writh, twist and squirm.

"Holy Moses! Vot vhas id, anyvay?" demanded Fritz.

"A wire rope with a grapnel in the end, one of the flukes of which caught in the muzzle of the gun," said the diver.

"But from where it coom?"

"Some boat on the surface, I suspect."

"Then yer thinks as thar's one o' our enemy's schooner a-floatin' about above us, a-grapneling fer ther treasure?" the old sailor questioned, with a surprised look.

"Exactly. I wish Wright was here. We'd go up."

"Whar is ther lad, anyway?"

"I saw his helmet light going through yonder street, and I suppose he has gone on exploring."

"Then I reckon as we'd better set sail in his wake, as thar's no tellin' wot danger he may git in, an' how much he may need our help."

"All right—go ahead."

They closed their visors and left the Spitfire.

Far ahead they could just distinguish the faint glow of Jack's helmet lamp, looking like a will-o-the-wisp in the gloom beyond where the rays of the searchlight struck.

"He must have seen a good deal of the city," spelled the diver.

"Aye," replied Tim. "But why is he standing there in one spot, then dodging around so quick for? Don't you notice his light?"

"It looks queer. Hurry along."

"Are you armed in case of trouble?"

"I've got a pistol."

"And I a knife."

They scanned the feathery leaves, the long, waving blades of sea grass as they went along, and saw that the houses were covered by mosses, lichens, barnacles and shells.

Every step they took through the sand stirred it up in clouds, and thousands of fish flashed before their visors above their heads, on either side and underneath them.

There were enormous conger eels, gigantic crabs, ugly tunny fish, schools of mackerel, tremendous swarms of lobsters, and myriads of star and jelly fish around them.

In places the street was so interlaced with tangled shrubbery that they had to force their way through it, when up from the midst of the aquatic bushes there arose the most villainous looking sea urchins, covered with prickly spines, and settled down on the adjacent sands like black nuts.

They had not gone many yards in this manner when they came to a building with a tremendous steeple of stone, and peering through the open doorway they beheld a large pyramid inside, on the top of which there rested a huge, ungainly stone idol.

It was rudely carved in the form of a squatting man, attired in robes and a steeple crown cap.

This ugly object was almost buried in slime and weeds, covered with creeping creatures, and was highly embellished with plates of tarnished metal.

As they stood eagerly regarding it, a huge block of stone became detached from the apex of the steeple, and fell so close to them that they narrowly escaped getting killed.

Recoiling, they glanced up.

And to their utter astonishment they beheld, by the searchlight, a diver perched on the top of the steeple, with an electric lamp in his hands, while from his body there arose surfaceward an air-hose and life-line.

He had evidently come down from a ship, and a quick glance around verified this suspicion on the part of Redyard and Tim, as they saw nearby the anchor rope of a vessel caught in the masonry of a house.

"He must have come from the ship that grapneled the Spitfire," the diver motioned Tim. "I wish we could catch him."

"Let's see if there isn't some way to get up there inside the building," the old sailor suggested, and he hobbled into the temple.

A short search revealed a flight of stone steps.

They mounted them, and reaching a landing, continued up a second flight, a third and a fourth.

In fact, these stairs, winding against the walls of the temple, finally led them straight up into the turret, and they presently came in sight of the top, where the diver clung, which was open.

The apex had fallen off.

Redyard was in advance, and when he reached the summit he suddenly went through the opening and seized the startled diver.

A terrific struggle began between them, and Redyard pulled the man through the opening upon the landing, when Tim went to the diver's aid.

CHAPTER XVI.

CAPTURING A DIVER.

Jack kept a keen glance fastened upon the shark he had shot, and saw that the wound he inflicted was a fatal one.

The monster writhed about, scattered the rest for a moment by its spasmodic struggles, and finally died.

It had hardly ceased living when the rest of the voracious creatures became maddened by the scent of its blood in the water, and darting at it, they tore its body to pieces and devoured it.

While they were so engaged, Jack glanced around in search of an avenue of escape, but saw that he could not go ten yards ere those horrible man-eaters would be after him.

In such a case he could not escape alive.

Torn by two of them, he could not have escaped death.

His glance fell upon a doorway close by, and he sprang for it, and passed through into the ruined building.

A slab of stone had fallen obliquely against the wall, and the boy jammed himself in between the opening.

No sooner had he begun to move the glittering suit in which he was clad when two of the sharks started for him.

They came like thunderbolts, but he lodged himself between the wall and the rock before they could reach him.

Between the wall and slab there was just room enough for him to squeeze his body, and the sharks managed to poke in their snouts, but the bigness of their heads barred them out.

Here Jack crouched in comparative safety.

The rest of the man-eaters had finished devouring their slain companion, and only half gorged, came and joined their two companions in an effort to reach the boy.

He saw his advantage, and aiming his pistol he fired several shots at them.

True to their mark sped the explosive bullets, and as each one penetrated a shark the most fearful devastation was created among them.

Four of the monsters were wounded.

They swam around in their agony dyeing the water crimson with their blood, and the fifth one fled precipitately.

One of the terrible creatures buried its teeth in one of its companions, and refused to let go when it died.

They remained fastened together thus, and fell to the sandy bottom, where they lay lifeless.

Another of them was so badly mangled it could scarcely swim, but the other, despite its fearful injuries, did not show any signs of succumbing.

"I'll give you another pill," muttered Jack.

He took deliberate aim at it and sent a ball into its head that blew it to fragments.

Jack then emerged from his cover and hastened back to the boat, which he quickly boarded.

He found Fritz in the pilot-house and opened his visor.

"Where are Tim and Redyard?" he asked.

"Dey yust gone oudt," replied the Dutch boy.

"Has anything occurred during my absence?"

"Yah! Dere vhas a poat oop ower us vot sendt down a crapple. It by der mout' ouf der ram catch idself, und Ret-yardt plo' id off mit a shots. How you make oudt?"

"I had a fight with some white sharks, but favored by good luck I escaped them uninjured. Do you know where the sailor and diver have gone to?"

"Vell, I see dem go in by dot bick house alretty ower dere."

"Let us steer the boat over to the house. I think we can explore this city much better with the Spitfire than we can afoot."

The Dutch boy assented to this, and Jack caused his boat to rise a few feet from the ground and started her ahead.

In this manner they proceeded toward the temple.

"What an immense building this is," remarked Jack, as he critically surveyed it. "The architecture is simply grand for the work of ancient savages."

"I tink so neider."

"What a high turret it has got!"

"I don't could see der top ouf id."

"Then I'll direct the searchlight on it."

Jack turned the blinding rays upon the building along the base.

Fritz had been striving to make out the top of the turret.

Suddenly he grasped Jack's arm excitedly and pointed up.

"Shiminey Christmas, Shack! Vot you call dot?" he gasped.

"What do you mean?" asked the startled boy.

"Look oop dere vunct."

He pointed to the top of the turret.

Jack glanced upward and started with surprise.

"Lights--moving lights!" he exclaimed.

"Fer sure! Vot make dem dere?"

"Perhaps I can see with the light."

The boy flung the rays up through the murky water, and the next moment a thrilling scene met their view.

On top of the turret stood the strange diver holding the body of Redyard over his head, as if about to hurl the diver down from the top of the turret to the street below.

The sudden flash of light in his eyes half blinded him, and caused him to recoil, faltering in his determination.

This respite probably saved Redyard's life, for before the stranger could carry out his tragic purpose Tim suddenly appeared and wrested Redyard from his clutches.

A struggle began between them.

Jack set the pumps working furiously, and the Spitfire rapidly ascended toward the desperate men.

In one minute she reached them and paused in her ascent.

Then she glided toward the struggling men and paused beside them, by which time Jack had rushed out on deck.

The boat lay against the masonry, and the boy inventor reached over and seized hold of the strange diver, pulled him bodily upon the deck of the Spitfire, and Redyard and Tim followed him, upon which the struggle was renewed.

Jack found his hands full with the man, who was a large and heavily built fellow of the greatest strength and utmost pluck.

All three of them got at him.

He was flung upon the deck and overpowered.

He jerked at his life-line, signaling his friends above to haul him up, and a strain at once came upon the line.

Jack whipped out his knife and cut the life-line.

He knew that this would only be a temporary relief from the strain coming from above, as the friends of the diver would next begin to haul in on the air-hose.

Consequently the boy dragged the diver toward the sea door aft, and just as they were about to push the man in, there came a terrific tug at the hose.

The diver was pulled out of their hands.

Out on the deck he rolled, and then he began to ascend.

Jack made a leap, and with one slash he cut the air-tube, when the diver fell drowning to the deck.

Into the water chamber he was pulled in a twinkling, and they got him inside of the boat before he could smother.

Opening his visor to give him air, they unscrewed his copper helmet while he was reviving, and stripped him of his diving suit, when they saw that he was a full-bearded man of forty with a very ugly face.

By the time the man recovered they had him bound hand and foot, and he gazed around at his surroundings with an expression of intense amazement upon his face.

"Thunder!" he gasped. "Where am I?"

"A prisoner in a submarine boat," replied Jack.

"Jack Wright's boat?"

"Exactly."

"That settles it, then!"

"What craft did you come from?"

"The Goblin Girl. We were trolling for treasure."

"Is she anchored overhead?"

"Yes."

"Then we will go up and capture her."

A startled look of dismay flashed over the man's face.

"Oh, Lord! What trouble!" he gasped.

"How came you to come down?"

"I'm a diver," replied the stranger, "and wanted to reach the sunken city. I didn't dare go to the bottom, though, for I had already gone so deep I was half senseless for a while."

"You had all your senses when Tim and I attacked you," grimly said Redyard, "for you flung my friend down a flight of stairs in the temple and easily lifted me to hurl me from the turret."

"Your attack revived me, and as I am a very strong man and was given additional strength by my desperation, I might have escaped you if this boat hadn't come up just then."

Jack questioned the diver closely about the Goblin Girl, and then passed into the pilot-house.

He sent the torpedo ram flying toward the surface, and she presently emerged from the sea within a short distance of the very schooner Jack had come in quest of to the Sargasso Sea.

CHAPTER XVII.

A BATTLE WITH GUNS.

The sun was shining down upon the grassy sea when the submarine boat emerged from the drift, covered with weed and glistening with water, near the schooner.

Still clad in his diving suit, and having his helmet visor open, Jack strode out on deck and glanced at the vessel.

She was a large craft, her decks almost flush with the sea, swarming with a large number of men and carrying several guns of very heavy calibre on both sides.

The crew were all gazing at the Spitfire in surprise.

Having observed that her sails were down and her anchor hove, Jack made up his mind that he had her at his mercy.

"Schooner ahoy!" he called to her.

"Ahoy—ahoy!" came the reply immediately.

"I will board you," said Jack.

"No, you won't! We won't allow it."

"You are aware that I am here to arrest you?"

"We know you came for that purpose, but we won't permit it."

"Resistance will cost many of your crew their lives."

"So will capture."

As the man said this he sprang to one of his guns, and with no further parley he aimed it at the Spitfire and fired.

A loud report followed, and a shot came flying toward the ram, and struck the deck at the stern.

The submarine boat was knocked over on her beam end, but her powerful plates resisted the shot, which, after inflicting a deep dent, glanced off and fell into the sea.

"We cannot compromise without a fight," muttered Jack.

He saw the crew of the schooner preparing another gun for use, and not wishing to offer his boat as a passive target, the boy ran inside and closed the blinds of metal.

He then grasped a wheel and pulled a lever.

With all the speed generated that she was capable of, the Spitfire dashed ahead under Jack's management.

Like a streak of lightning she charged on the schooner, the spray flying up from her half-buried ram, and her immense screw revolving at a terrific rate.

The boy steered her to aim at the schooner's bow.

"All ready!" cried Jack to his friends.

They flung themselves flat on the floor, and the boy braced himself for the inevitable shock that was bound to come.

A chorus of yells arose on the deck of the schooner.

"She's charging on us!"

"Slip the anchor, and raise the sails."

"Fire the starboard gun!"

"He's going to ram us!"

"Get out of the way, there! All hands fore and aft!"

"Use your small arms, and fire quick."

"Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!"

Such were the cries which came from the schooner men, and every one was rushing around her deck like lunatics.

One man was trying to loosen the anchor, another attempting to fire the gun, a third endeavoring to steer her out of danger without steerageway, and while a few strove to get up the sails, the rest were hastily producing their rifles and pistols.

On plunged the Spitfire.

Then she struck the Spitfire.

Crash!

It was a fearful blow.

Splintered wood flew in all directions.

The ram had been driven with such fearful force that the front top knife blade had cut into the schooner's planking, and an enormous hole was rammed into the hull.

The Spitfire recoiled from the fearful shock, and a yell of consternation pealed from the crew of the Goblin Girl.

They rushed to the bulwarks, and peering over the side, saw what damage was done to the schooner's hull.

Then they recovered, and rage succeeded their fear.

Every one who was armed now began to discharge their weapons at the submarine boat, and a hail of bullets rattled against the Spitfire's hull.

"Donner und blitzen!" roared the combative Dutch boy, in a rage. "Some vun gief me a cannon till I baralyze 'em."

"Shall we fire our rifles at 'em, lad?" queried Tim.

"No," replied Jack. "They can't hurt us with those things, as you know our hull is bullet proof. The rascals are in a peck of trouble now, and will be worse off soon."

"It's funny their craft don't sink," said Redyard, as he peered through a screened loophole. "You've stove a hole in her planks big enough to row a boat through, yet she floats as steadily as ever. Don't you notice it?"

"Yes; but I've got an idea about that," answered Jack.

"To what do you allude?"

"She must be furnished with air-tight compartments."

"That's just what I thought."

"I'll ram her again."

The Spitfire was fifty yards away from the schooner then, but the boy swung her around, aimed her at the big schooner, put on power, and away she went.

The crew of the Goblin Girl attested that they saw her intention by uttering a wild yell.

Ahead rushed the ram, sending up a shower of spray at her prow, and with an awful crash she struck the schooner amidships and the wood flew in showers.

The Goblin Girl was knocked back a dozen yards.

Every one upon her deck was knocked sprawling, and as Jack reversed the lever, and the recoil of the boat dragged her ram free, he saw that a second gaping hole had been driven through her planking.

The weedy water gushed into it.

Yet she did not sink, and the ram retired.

A scene of intense confusion had ensued among her crew, the chorus of cries they uttered raising a din.

Jack flung open a window.

"Will you surrender, or shall we destroy you?" he yelled.

"You can never sink us!" came the defiant reply.

"But I can use my guns."

"And so can we."

"Obstinate rascals," muttered the boy.

A moment afterward a second shot roared from one of the guns upon the schooner, but the gunner was so nervous and excited that he aimed poorly, and the ball only grazed the top of the pilot-house.

Jack swung the Spitfire around and ran off to a distance of two miles from the schooner.

"What are you doing this for?" queried Redyard, in surprise. "I hope you ain't afraid of their guns?"

"Bless you, no!" laughed the boy, as he brought his boat to a pause. "We were at too close quarters. I'm going to use my turret gun on him at long range."

He then went up into the conning tower.

The crew of the schooner by this time had slipped their anchors, raised their sails, and began firing their guns at the Spitfire, but she was so far distant that they failed hit her.

Jack began to operate his gun against the schooner, and fired several shots at her.

Three of the projectiles struck the Goblin Girl.

The first one carried away her mainmast, the second tore a hole in her hull, and the third raked her deck, destroying much of the woodwork and many of her crew.

Before Jack could discharge his weapon again he saw his enemies raise a flag of truce, and the two quarter boats were lowered and filled with all her crew.

The schooner was abandoned.

Both boats, bearing white flags, were then pulled rapidly toward the Spitfire, and soon arrived alongside.

"Well?" queried Jack, from the conning tower.

"We surrender to save our lives."

"Good! Let each man come aboard singly."

This was done.

As fast as they boarded the Spitfire they were bound hand and foot by Tim and Fritz.

Jack had gained the victory.

He then drove his boat back to the abandoned schooner.

But there were huge air-tight compartments in the hull, which buoyed the vessel up against the water she shipped.

They next examined her cargo.

Just as he suspected, it consisted of a miscellaneous assortment of goods, bearing the shipping marks of different vessels like the parcels in the craft he caught off Wrightstown.

It was therefore very evident that the contents of the vessels had been pillaged by piracy, as one of his captives confessed.

Thirty prisoners had been taken from the vessel.

She was furnished with a complete plant for diving, was provisioned for a long cruise, and was fully armed.

In all, the boy considered that he had made a most important capture, and satisfying himself that the vessel could be sailed back to port in safety, should it become necessary to do so, he had every one of his forty-three prisoner fastened in the schooner's cabin, so they would not burden the Spitfire.

A hawser was then made fast to her and rove to the ram.

Jack then started his boat off with the prize in tow.

It was late in the afternoon, and as he stood swinging the wheel, Tim entered the pilot-house, and asked him:

"Wot are ye a-goin' ter do wi' her, Jack."

"Keep her in tow, and scour this sea for the rest of the gang. If I had an opportunity of getting rid of her, I would do so. In place of such a chance I intend to use her battery in conjunction with my own in case we meet with either of the other two vessels."

"She'll be a terrible hindrance in case we fouls any o' ther other crafts," said Tim. "'Spose yer wants ter sink or run?"

"We would have to part company with her temporarily, and——"

"An' wot?" queried Tim, as the boy suddenly paused.

"Hold on! Isn't that a sail I see, off to the southward there?"

"Aye, now, so it is, an' it's a 'warship, too, my lad."

"You are right, Tim," said the boy, applying a glass to his eye and scanning the distant sail. "What splendid sight you have got in that old optic of yours."

"They say that when a feller loses his starboard squintin'-tackle, its strength goes inter ther one on ther port side, which gives a lubber ther advantage o' double sight."

Jack saw that the vessel was a man-of-war, but of what nation he could not yet make out.

"She's heading for the northwest," he remarked, "and she's a big steam cruiser, making at least fourteen knots."

"Gimme ther glass; mebbe I kin make her out."

Jack handed it over, and after a brief survey, Tim said:

"A Yankee, by thunder!"

"How do you know?"

"I know by ther cut of her hull."

Half an hour passed by, and they kept watching the stranger.

At the expiration of that time Jack exclaimed:

"You are not mistaken. I see her flag—the stars and stripes."

"Must be homeward bound from Europe."

"Very likely. Her appearance is a Godsend to us, though."

"How's that?"

"Why; we can get rid of our prize and prisoners."

"Ah, I see. Yer mean ter saddle 'em on ther frigate."

"Exactly. That will give us more freedom for action."

"Then head fer her, an' we'll meet her, my lad."

Jack nodded, and changing the boat's course, he bore down upon the frigate and rapidly approached her.

Within an hour they were close together when the boy signaled the frigate to haul to.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LEAK.

An examination of Jack's prize showed him that there were two enormous holes stove in the hull by the ram and another made by the ball from the gun.

Any one of them would have sufficed to sink her.

He then had a portable rowboat he carried launched, and Tim rowed him over to the gunboat.

As soon as Jack gained her deck, he met the commander, who cordially saluted him, and asked why he was stopped.

"I am in the employ of the government, and my papers show for what purpose," said Jack, presenting the documents.

The naval officer became more cordial, and said:

"I am homeward bound from a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea, and am glad I met you. Is that a prize you have got there? I hope I can serve you."

"She is a prize, sir," replied the boy, "and there are forty-three prisoners aboard of her."

"You are lucky."

"I am sadly handicapped, though, for by being burdened with this craft and crew, it is hard for me to maneuver around and hunt down the other two vessels. I would therefore like to have you take them to port for me."

"I shall do so with pleasure."

Jack was delighted.

This unexpected good fortune surprised him.

A desultory conversation then ensued about the torpedo ram, and her exploits and capabilities.

Then the prisoners were transferred to the frigate, and the captive schooner was taken in tow.

Jack made out a report of the capture, and giving it to the captain, he thanked him, and they parted.

It was a great relief to the boy to get rid of these encumbrances, and he started his boat away, and cried:

"There won't be any bother for us now, boys."

"When I wuz in ther navy——" began Tim.

"Rats!" interposed Bismarck gravely.

"We had a prize ship in tow," continued Tim.

"Shut up!" persisted the parrot.

"An' a big storm arose, when——"

"Hey!" screamed the parrot. "Take a tumble, will you?"

This was more than Tim's patience could stand, and he uttered a roar, like an enraged bull, and rushed for the bird.

He stood on a chair.

Tim picked up a rifle and aimed a blow at Bismarck.

Bang! came the weapon down toward the parrot's head, when Fritz jerked the chair away, and encountering nothing but thin air, down came the rifle on Tim's good shin.

He yelled and flew up in the air.

"I'm killed!" he bellowed.

"Ach vhy didn'd yer knock yerselluf into doot-bicks?" grinned Fritz.

"Shut up, yer Dutch lubber, or I'll keel haul yer."

"Der next dime yer pedder put in a goot eye ter see straight."

"Say, Fritz, yer better git measured, if yer don't stow yer jawin'-tackle."

"Measured! Fer vot?"

"Yer coffin. I'll lay yer out!"

"Vot? You? Go vay! Go vay, Dim. Yer don't vhas such a pad man like yer vhas dry ter make pelieve alretty. Vait, und I show yer someding."

He caught Tim by the nose and gave it a twist.

In a moment the old sailor was in a spasm, and the Dutch boy rushed out of the door with a vise-like grip on the old sailor's proboscis, and pulled him from the room.

Jack and the diver paid but little heed to the row, but started the boat off on her hunt for the two vessels.

They had a long and tiresome search ahead of them, for two weeks passed uneventfully by, not even a ship appearing.

At the expiration of that time a change came in the form of a threatening sky and heavy gales.

The sea rose and a deep gloom settled down.

Then the storm broke.

As the Spitfire was roughly handled by the warring elements, Jack resolved to bury her under the sea out of reach of the storm, until it had blown over.

"We can accomplish nothing on the surface in such a sea," he said to his friends, as the boat was rolled and pitched about, "and in the comparative quiet of the bottom of the sea we will be in a place of safety."

"Don't you intend to return to the sunken city?" asked Redyard anxiously. "There are such fabulous treasures there yet, that we can have for the taking, it's a pity to go off with the trifling amount of it which we have secured."

"I will return there when the government work is done," the boy replied, "for we cannot burden our craft with weight if it becomes necessary to maneuver her properly."

"Very true! I did not think of that."

Jack turned the pump lever, compressing the air into the end chambers, when a violent shriek arose.

It sounded like a shrill steamboat whistle, and as the boat began to descend, there came a bubbling and gurgling sound.

"Good heavens!" muttered Jack, as the truth dawned upon his mind. "The air is escaping from one of the reservoirs, and we won't be able to ascend if it all leaks out."

The others were very much startled.

Jack grasped the pump lever and reversed it, and then stopped the influx of water into the ballast room.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TWO SCHOONERS.

By the time Jack had reversed his pump lever the Spitfire was entirely submerged beneath the angry water.

The boy had to act rapidly to save his vessel from a most serious fatality by starting the pumps to empty her again of the water she had shipped.

As soon as this water was forced out of her she went to the stormy surface again, and the whistling sound continued until the compressed air was allowed to expand again.

Then it stopped.

She floated on the surface all right.

Jack went below in a diving suit, and entered the air reservoir from whence the wind was escaping up forward.

It was furnished with electric lights, and when the boy turned them on he exposed a compartment through which ran coil after coil of large pipes, through which the sea water automatically flowed all the time.

As compressed air heats at a high pressure by this arrangement, it can be kept in its normal condition.

He searched around for a long time before he found the leak, and then discovered that it came from a crack in one of the hull plates where a cannon ball had hit the boat.

His experienced eyes showed him plainly that there was no way of rectifying the evil except by inserting a new plate, but it was utterly impossible to do so in such a rough sea-way, and they therefore could not submerge.

Returning to his companions Jack explained the trouble, and they lay tossing on the surface all night long at the mercy of the gale.

Two days of this sort of treatment followed before the gale abated, the sky cleared, and the seas went down, and when the afternoon sun shone down they had been driven many miles from where the sunken city lay.

Jack was in the dining room, partaking of the excellent meal Fritz had prepared, and Tim and Redyard were with him, chatting over their situation, when the Dutch boy suddenly called:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Aye!" cried Jack, arising. "Where away?"

"Two sails ho! Two sails ho!" roared Fritz.

"Yes. What do you make them out to be?"

"Donner vetter! Tree sails ho! Tree sails ho!"

"Good Lord! Wot a sailor!" scoffed Tim.

"Und shiminey Christmas, fellers, dey're a-fightin'!" yelled Fritz.

Up jumped every one, and out on deck they ran.

Hardly more than a league away to the eastward there was a large, handsome ship, flying along with all sails set, pursued by two black schooners.

Both of these latter vessels were exact fac-similes of the vessel Jack had captured, and the boy exclaimed:

"As true as I live, boys, they are the very crafts we are after, and the beggars are attacking yonder ship."

"Oh, if we only had the leaky air-chamber fixed now, so we could tackle them under water!" said the diver, regretfully. "We are placed at a disadvantage."

"Nevertheless, I am going to the rescue of that ship!" exclaimed Jack determinedly. "Fritz, put on full power, and let's see if we can't overhaul them."

"All right," replied the fat boy, complying.

"They are a-headin' ter ther south'ard," said Tim, taking a chew.

"We'll soon overhaul them," said Jack confidently.

"Did yer vhas goin' ter ram dem?" queried Fritz.

"If it becomes necessary."

"Den come insite vhen ve vhas near by dem."

The Spitfire went rapidly through the grassy sea, and approached to within half a mile of the three vessels before the crews betokened by any sign that she was seen.

In the meantime, the two schooners had rapidly overhauled the ship, as they were the faster sailers, and opened fire upon her with the guns they carried.

She was badly pounded by the time the rascals on the schooners saw the ram, and their actions conclusively proved to Jack what their vocation was.

"There can't be any doubt of their being pirates," said the boy. "See how well armed they are and how they have battered that ship."

"Then thar's no excuse fer us if we don't blow ther lubbers sky high!" said Tim. "I'll man ther turret gun."

"All right, old fellow; but don't fire till I tell you to," said Jack, as he passed inside with the diver.

The ram was then prepared for battle.

Every window was covered with the metal shutters, and a large locomotive torpedo was inserted in the pneumatic gun in readiness for use.

The crews of the schooners were pointing at the Spitfire, and evidently knew what she was, for all hostilities against the fugitive ship ceased, and the schooners were maneuvered to encounter the ram.

Jack saw through the loopholes that both vessels were furnished with guns of heavy calibre, and he was about to direct Fritz to slacken speed when there came a report from each vessel.

Two shots had been fired at the ram.

With a loud hum, they flew over the water, and while the first one dropped short of its mark, the other one flew clear over the boat.

"Dey fire at us," excitedly said Fritz.

"That's evidence that they know us," replied Jack.

"Vhich vun I aim for?"

"The nearest. It's only a quarter of a mile away."

"Hello, thar!" came Tim's voice through the tube. "Will fire?"

"Give the furthest schooner a shot. They are going to fire

"Aye, aye, lad!"

A moment afterward the turret gun roared, and a shot flew over the water at the most distant craft.

Despite the fact of Tim having but one eye, he was a magnificent gunner, and the ball struck its mark.

It landed upon the bulwark of the schooner and burst there, tearing the woodwork to pieces, dismantled a gun, the flying iron seriously injuring some of the crew, and considerable of the deck planking was torn up.

"Good for Tim!" exclaimed Redyard, who was peering out through one of the portholes. "He's a good shot!"

The strange ship had been passed and left astern, where she hauled up into the wind, and her crew watched the progress of the fight.

On dashed the ram, and before the crew of the first vessel could wear ship to get in the use of her starboard guns, the terrible ram struck her.

There came an ear-splitting crash as the projection plunged through the schooner's planking, tearing a hole in her side, and both vessels separated.

For a moment a furious uproar arose among the crew of the vessel that was struck, for the sea water was pouring into her rapidly.

Then the Spitfire charged again.

An awful shock followed, and the schooner was almost cut in two.

"If that don't scuttle her it will be strange," said Jack.

"She don't could sink," said Fritz in disgust.

"Why not?" demanded Jack.

"'Cause she haf air-dighd gompardments alretty."

"It seems so. I'll hail her captain."

The boy opened one of the loopholes, and then yelled:

"Schooner ahoy!"

A volley of abuse was all the reply he received.

"Surrender, and we'll save your lives!" continued Jack.

Another chorus of expletives was hurled at him.

"Then refuse, and I'll blow you up," said the boy.

"Blow, and——"

But Jack did not wait to hear the rest of the defiance.

He slammed the loophole shut, and ordered Fritz to drive the Spitfire away, and it was done.

The boy then aimed the airgun.

As soon as he had done this he pulled the lever, and the long torpedo shot from the muzzle into the sea.

It was set to run two feet under water at great velocity, steering itself toward the schooner.

A moment after it struck the water it vanished, but a ruffle upon the surface showed Jack its course.

Along it went like a serpent upon its errand of destruction, and it soon reached the schooner.

The moment it touched her it exploded.

There was a heavy charge in the torpedo, and there came a report that could be heard for miles around.

And the schooner was blown to pieces.

It seemed as if its own powder magazine had burst, so complete was the destruction, and as the vessel disappeared in a mass of flying debris, a few of its crew were left swimming in the sea.

CHAPTER XX.

A GOVERNMENT CONTRACT FINISHED.

The moment the crew of the second schooner saw the fate which had overtaken their consort, they began to pour a heavy fire at the ram.

Several of these shots struck her.

Fortunately for the Spitfire she was not hit in a vital spot, and her hull and skeleton were constructed to resist a pounding of that kind, for no serious damage was done by any of the shots.

"I would stop and pick up the survivors of the wreck," exclaimed Jack angrily, "if it wasn't for those shots. We have no time to lose in charity now. They won't permit it. An unlucky shot might do us great damage. Let us follow that fellow at once and put an end to his barking."

"How about another shot at that lubber's locker, Jack?" Tim called down through the tube just then.

"Can you reach him at long range?"

"Aye, if I kin git a square elevation o' ther gun."

"Then let her rip!"

"Aye, aye, lad!"

By this time the other schooner was a mile away, as the Spitfire had been hauled to, and the other had been running along as fast as she could go.

Tim was confident, however.

He had his gun loaded and fired it, but just then the motion of the sea caused the Spitfire to dip, spoiling Tim's aim, and the shot fell short.

Tim was furious.

More especially as another shot from the fugitive just then grazed the top of the conning tower.

"I'll hit him ther next time or bust!" he growled, as he prepared the gun for action.

This time the old sea-dog made due allowance for the swell of the sea, and firing the second shot, he soon had the satisfaction of seeing it carry away the schooner's after deck.

That stopped their firing for a while.

"A better shot could scarcely have been fired," said Jack, after calling up the tube to Tim to cease hostilities.

"Vhy don'd yer chase him mit a dorpedo?" queried Fritz.

"The water between the schooner and this boat isn't as clear of the drift weed as it was when I sent out the other one," replied Jack, "but I can try it, as it has a powerful propeller, and may be able to force its way up to the schooner. Get one, Redyard."

The diver nodded and retired to the arsenal.

"Don'd I vhas pedder follow dot schooner?" asked Fritz. "All der vwhile vot ve stay oursellufs here, dose son-ohf-a-sea-gooks run deir sellufs away from us alretty, und soon ve don'd been able to catch 'em."

"Go ahead after I send the torpedo out," answered Jack. "But if you keep her stationary until then, I can work the pneumatic gun to better advantage."

"Yust as you blease."

Redyard soon returned with the projectile, and they opened the breech of the gun and placed it in.

Jack then aimed for the schooner, and fired.

He had graded the cigar-shaped cylinder to run along the top of the sea, as it would there meet with less resistance from the weed, and they therefore had a chance to clearly discern all its movements.

The torpedo landed on the sea eight hundred yards away from the boat, dove down, and coming up again it started off on its trip with its propellers rapidly revolving, leaving a clearly defined trail through the dark green drift.

They watched its movements closely, and saw it force its way through the weed easily enough, although the speed at which it was graded to travel at was somewhat retarded.

Along ran the torpedo, and an eagerly anxious look over-spread the faces of the watchers, as they saw it draw rapidly near the schooner.

"She vhas gone!" triumphantly cried Fritz.

"Well—don't be too sure!" admonished Jack quietly.

"—but straight the vhat go for id."

"See! Your impression is wrong."

The torpedo had struck against the floating debris blow from the schooner and exploded ere reaching the vessel.

A roar and a terrible upheaval of water and weeds followed, then there came the faint sound of a yell of derision from the ocean outlaws upon the schooner, upon seeing the failure of the torpedo to do its work.

"Failed!" said Redyard, in disgust.

"I feared it," answered Jack.

"Ach! I could haf done pedder mineselluf," Fritz growled.

"I think not," said Jack. "Put on power and run her down. We can do better at closer range in this dense, weedy sea."

Fritz turned the starting lever, the enormous wheel spun around, covered with weed, and away went the ram.

It soon became evident that she was fast bearing down upon the fugitive, and a lively chase ensued, as the schooner's helmsman was an expert navigator, and took advantage of every favorable point to keep ahead of the Spitfire.

Despite every effort on the part of the schooner's crew, however, they were no match for Jack and his boat, and were soon overhauled.

Then the rascals commenced to bombard the ram with their guns again, and Tim returned the fire.

Up to the present time the ram had escaped any serious damage from these shots, but Jack feared that an unlucky shot might at any moment strike his boat and disable her.

"Keep right on, Fritz," he exclaimed, "but work her to stay plumb astern of the schooner as much as possible, for by that means we can escape a direct shot and thus save ourselves."

The Dutch boy did as he was told.

Jack then asked Redyard to fetch in another torpedo, and when it arrived, he very carefully adjusted its working parts and the gun reservoir was filled with iron.

He then inserted the torpedo and locked the breech.

The Spitfire dashed ahead, and soon arrived within speaking distance of the schooner, when Jack saw that she carried a large crew of desperate and well-armed ruffians, who were then trying to drag one of the guns to the taffrail to bear on the ram.

Fritz had maneuvered the boat so adroitly thus far under Jack's instructions, that the rascals had not been able to get in another shot at her, on account of their guns being mounted at the port and starboard.

The boy was merciful.

"I'll give them a chance for their lives," he remarked.

"It's wasted sympathy," remarked Redyard.

"Perhaps. Anyway, I'll do it."

He then hailed the crew of the schooner.

"I hold your lives in my hands," he shouted to them, "and I am empowered by the American government to capture or kill you. Give in peacefully, and you will have no trouble. Resist, and you die."

"Death before capture!" yelled the captain.

"So be it," said Jack.

He fired the torpedo just as they brought their gun to bear upon the Spitfire, and it rushed at the schooner.

They were so close to their target there was no missing. Boom! roared the explosive.

Its point had touched the schooner's rudder post and the ensuing explosion shook the sea.

The vessel was half torn to pieces, only the forward portion of her remaining adrift, with some of her crew clinging to it for the rest perished.

"That ends them," said Jack.

"Good! Shall we pick up the rest?" queried the diver.

"Yes. They will afford substantial proof that we have accomplished the work we set out to do."

There were but half a dozen of the wretches saved from the wreck ere it sank forever.

Jack then closely examined his boat, and found that she had suffered no damage beyond the cracked plate and some pretty loud bangs.

"She bravely withstood her punishment," said the boy. "Let us get to work upon her, and when she is in proper condition we will return to the sunken city, for our work here is done."

They began operations, and in the course of a few hours the boat was in as good condition as ever.

They did not go near the ship they saved, but, with their prisoners safely bound, they went beneath the sea again.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GIANT OF THE DEEP.

A cruise under water followed, and when day broke upon the earth again the Spitfire reached the suburbs of the sunken city and quietly rested on the bottom.

Our friends had a good rest and a tasteful breakfast down among the fishes, and then the boat was sent off on a tour of inspection of the sunken city under Tim's direction.

They found the strange city to be of great dimensions.

"It must have had a population of half a million souls," said Jack by the time a circuit of the place had been completed, "and in that case it is very evident that the island was immensely large."

"So I inferred from the old paper," said Redyard. "These people were evidently in an advanced stage of civilization for isolated savages. Look at their dwellings and the exquisite workmanship of their arts. Their tools and utensils were of a primitive pattern, yet they have accomplished wonders in the way of living."

"I observe," said Jack, "that our first landing place was the quarter devoted to the dignitaries of the place, for there all the wealth is accumulated. In these smaller houses of the lesser lights there is no sign of such wealth. It therefore behooves us to go back to the center of the city to accumulate our horde."

"There's a singular curiosity," said Redyard.

He pointed off to the left.

It was a wrecked ship which had come down from the surface, and now rested on its keel upon the roof of one of the houses.

Covered with weeds, slime, plants and barnacles, it was very evident that the wreck had been in its present position for a long time.

Fishes were swimming in and out and all around it, the submarine currents streamed out the broken ends of rotten cordage, and a gaping fissure in the side showed where the fatal accident had occurred to the vessel that sent her to the bottom.

As the Spitfire was passing around the eastern side of the city she encountered an immense conical pyramid of rocks that shot their jagged summits up high in the water toward the surface.

There was something about the formation of them that attracted Jack's attention, and he said to Tim:

"Stop the boat and follow up these shafts toward the surface. They ascend so high that they must go pretty near to the surface of the sea."

The old sailor complied.

Up, up went the boat, following the jagged rocks until she came within a few feet of the top

"Look at that," said the boy, calculating the distance with his eye. "The tops of these rocks come to within five feet of the tops at low tide. What a menace to passing ships. I wouldn't be surprised if the vessel we just encountered was wrecked by striking on the jagged top of them."

"Any ship crossing the ocean is of twice the draught necessary to reach them," remarked Redyard, "and they lie here unseen, unexpected, a menace to every passing vessel."

"My plan is to blast them," said Jack.

"Dot vhas goot," said Fritz. "How you commence alretty?"

"We can go to the base and plant a torpedo there which can be discharged by electricity."

The boat then descended to the bottom again, and Jack attired himself in a diving suit.

The boy then took several elongated brass cylinders heavily charged with horrorite, and a coil of wire, left the boat, and planted the explosives in crevices.

He then attached his insulated wires, ran them to the boat, and signaled Tim to back away to a safe distance, after which the Dutch boy connected the battery with the wire and sent a current through it.

A muffled report followed.

The sea was agitated violently, an enormous mass of sand was stirred up, blurring the water, and they saw by the searchlight that the rocks were shattered and fell.

"We have done a deed of charity. Passing ships are under a debt of obligation to us for which we will never be thanked," said Jack to himself, "for no one will ever be likely to hear about the way we destroyed that column."

He remained outside, coiling in the wire and signaled to Tim to drive the boat across the city.

From his position in the bow Jack kept up a survey of the houses and streets they passed over and observed that this section of the place was in ruins.

It looked as if some great calamity, such as a violent earthquake had visited the spot, for many of the houses had fallen down, leaving nothing but piles of masonry half buried in the sand, to mark the spots where they stood.

Within a short time the Spitfire arrived at the great plaza where she had first landed, surrounding which were the large public buildings wherein they had seen so much ornamentation of tarnished gold.

Here the boat paused and alighted.

Fritz then came out, attired in his diving suit, and joining Jack, they descended from the boat into the street and headed for an immense building standing on the western side of the square looking like a palace.

"We must keep close together," spelled Jack, in the deaf and dumb alphabet, "for I have found this sea to be so full of hostile denizens, that it is absolutely dangerous to travel around without a companion to help you in case of an attack. Here's the entrance—come in."

There was a large portico ahead of them, and when Tim saw where they were going, he turned the glare of the searchlight upon the doorway.

It had the effect of illuminating the interior.

But just as they were going in a school of thousands of fishes that lived within the portals of the great house, became frightened at their sudden appearance there, and came swimming toward them in a mass.

The two boy divers were overwhelmed, and knocked down by the enormous mass of fish, but as soon as the scaly objects passed they arose, and resumed their advance.

Passing into a huge square courtyard, in which there were mounds and hillocks of sand, they saw that there were innumerable apartments opening onto it on all sides, and they passed through one of them.

supported by great carved stone pillars, while all around the walls stood massive stone pedestals, each one of which sustained a square stone box, the lids of which were closed.

"What a strange room!" spelled Fritz.

"Looks like a treasure chamber," answered Jack.

"Do you think these boxes contain money?"

"Not money, but probably ingots of gold."

"Help me lift up one of the lids."

"Try this one first."

Jack had selected the most likely looking one near him, and they took hold of the cover between them.

It was made of solid stone and raised hard, but as soon as they got it up and flung it to the floor, they eagerly peered into the box.

With cries of dismay they recoiled.

The box contained a mummy!

It was water-soaked and hideous to look upon, and their fond delusion of finding the crypt filled with wealth was rudely banished, and left them disgusted.

"We struck a graveyard!" motioned Fritz.

"No doubt these are the remains of the rulers of the people who dwelt here," replied Jack. "Come on."

They passed into the next room.

It looked like a sanctuary, and the adjoining chamber proved to be a great arena with a ring in the center, and seats surrounding it for spectators.

As they stood regarding it, there came a terrific commotion in the water overhead, and an enormous body appeared.

It was a whale of the species whose gullet was large enough to swallow a man, and of a disposition as ugly and hostile as that of a ravenous shark.

The monster was so unexpected, and actually out of the ordinary latitude of its usual haunts, that the two boys were amazed and began to retreat.

Unfortunately the intense glitter of their metallie suits had the tendency to attract the different fish toward them, as a blue fish will run after a shiner hook.

The moment they moved the whale observed them, and sent its enormous body straight toward the two boys, who, in their haste to escape, tripped over the seats, and rolling down an aisle, fell into the closed arena.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

When Jack and Fritz got upon their feet they saw that they were caught in a trap from which it would be hard to escape, for the arena was surrounded by a wall ten feet high.

The entrance to it was all choked up with sand.

The whale had gone by when they fell, and lost sight of them for a moment, upon observing which Jack nudged Fritz, and hastily spelled:

"Bury yourself in the sand."

"What for?" queried the fat boy.

"So it can't see you."

Jack set the example, and soon was covered with the sand, lying flat on his back, and Fritz did likewise.

They only left their visors uncovered, and as their shiny suits were hidden from the view of the whale, and the bull's-eyes of their lamps were covered, they were not seen.

But they could dimly discern the leviathan swimming around above in quest of them, and the giant fish at one time glided over them so close as to graze them.

Then it disappeared.

Both remained quiet for some time after.

They felt intensely relieved over its departure without mo-

lesting them, for the weapons with which they were armed would have been perfectly useless to defend themselves against the monster, destructive as they were ordinarily.

As soon as the boys were perfectly sure that the creature was gone, they got upon their feet again.

"Is the coast clear?" queried Fritz.

"I can't see any signs of it," replied Jack.

"How are we to get out of here?"

"Have to climb it. Come over here."

Jack led him over to the wall, and motioning him to stand with his back against it, the young inventor climbed up Fritz's body and caught hold of the top.

The Dutch boy got from under him.

While Jack hung there by his hands, Fritz climbed up his body, and, reaching the top, he helped the boy to get up.

An inspection of the other rooms followed, and they discovered one apartment in which there was a most lavish display of golden ornaments.

They were easily carried to the boat and stowed on board whereupon Redyard was impressed to their aid, and the three carried everything valuable to the Spitfire upon which they could get their hands.

The day passed away, and night came before they desisted from their labors, tired and hungry.

Doffing their suits, they sat down to supper.

"It will only take one more day to secure all the gold our boat will carry," said Jack, during the course of the meal.

"We can then leave here."

"By heavens, there's a vast treasure scattered about down here!" said Redyard. "We will have a fortune to divide when all this stuff is sold, Wright."

"I s'pose ye thinks as this are wonderful, don't yer, Redyard?" queried Tim, pityingly; "but I don't."

"You don't?"

"No."

"Then what do you consider wonderful?"

"When I wuz quartermaster o' ther ole frigate Wabash," said Tim, "we runned down a pirate named Bloodybones, blowed his schooner ter pieces and raided his den, but found nuthin'. Then we sailed away. A year arterwards I got leave, an' veered back ter ther cave, an' a-tackin' aroun' in thar I found Bloodybones' treasure."

"Good for you!" said Redyard, approvingly.

"Thar wuz ten kegs o' diamonds, forty bar'l o' rubies, six hogsheads o' pearls, an' four tons o' gold."

"The deuce!" muttered Redyard, realizing that it was a lie.

"Waal, sir," said Tim, "I went an' got a ship, carted 'em aboard, sailed away, an' sold 'em."

"You ought to be a billionaire, then."

"No sich luck fer me as that," said Tim, shaking his head.

"Why—how's that?"

"It didn't do me no good."

"Why—did you lose it?"

"Aye—that I did."

"How?"

"Card-playing."

"It must have been a stiff game."

"I reckon it was, fer——"

But Tim expanded no further, for Fritz had his old accordion ready and cut in on him just then with a doleful tune, and as Tim hated the instrument he wanted to murder the Dutch boy right away.

He chased Fritz out of the dining room, and Jack and the diver continued their supper in peace.

A few hours later the watch was divided, they turned in, and the lonesome night passed away.

Next morning all hands were up early, and after breakfast the hunt for treasure was resumed.

They worked hard, and by nightfall finished their work, for the Spitfire was laden with as much of the precious metal as she could conveniently carry.

On the following morning our friends left the sunken city, and traveled along to the westward a whole day under water.

When night fell again they arose to the top of the waves, and found themselves out of the grassy sea.

Fair weather now attended them, and the rest of the journey homeward was made on the surface.

The torpedo ram had accomplished her purpose, and had no call to remain any longer in the Sargasso.

A pleasant journey followed, and she passed over the Atlantic, heading for New York.

In due course of time she safely made port, and ran up to the navy yard in Brooklyn, from whence Jack made his report to the authorities at Washington regarding the success of his trip.

His prisoners were landed and imprisoned with the ones whom he had sent ahead by the man-of-war and the ones he had incarcerated at Wrightstown.

The two schooners were also confiscated.

The boy's evidence convicted the men of piracy, and they suffered the penalty of their crimes.

Jack then received the promised reward, and divided it in four equal shares among himself and his companions.

When the gold was sold, an enormous sum of money was realized from it, and this was also divided among them.

Redyard then took leave of the boy inventor and his friends, and returned to England a rich man.

The Spitfire was then driven back to Wrightstown and returned to Jack's shop, where she was stored away.

The young inventor, his two friends, and the parrot and monkey returned to Jack's beautiful home.

There were, however, other adventures in store for them, for Jack's native genius soon asserted itself again, and he began the construction of a marvelous wonder, with the assistance of his friends.

For a time, though, we must leave them, as it will soon be our province to show Jack's new invention, and as our tale is concluded, we must bring it to

THE END.

Read "THE RIVAL SCHOOLS; OR, FIGHTING FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP," by Allyn Draper, which will be the next number (263) of "Pluck and Luck."

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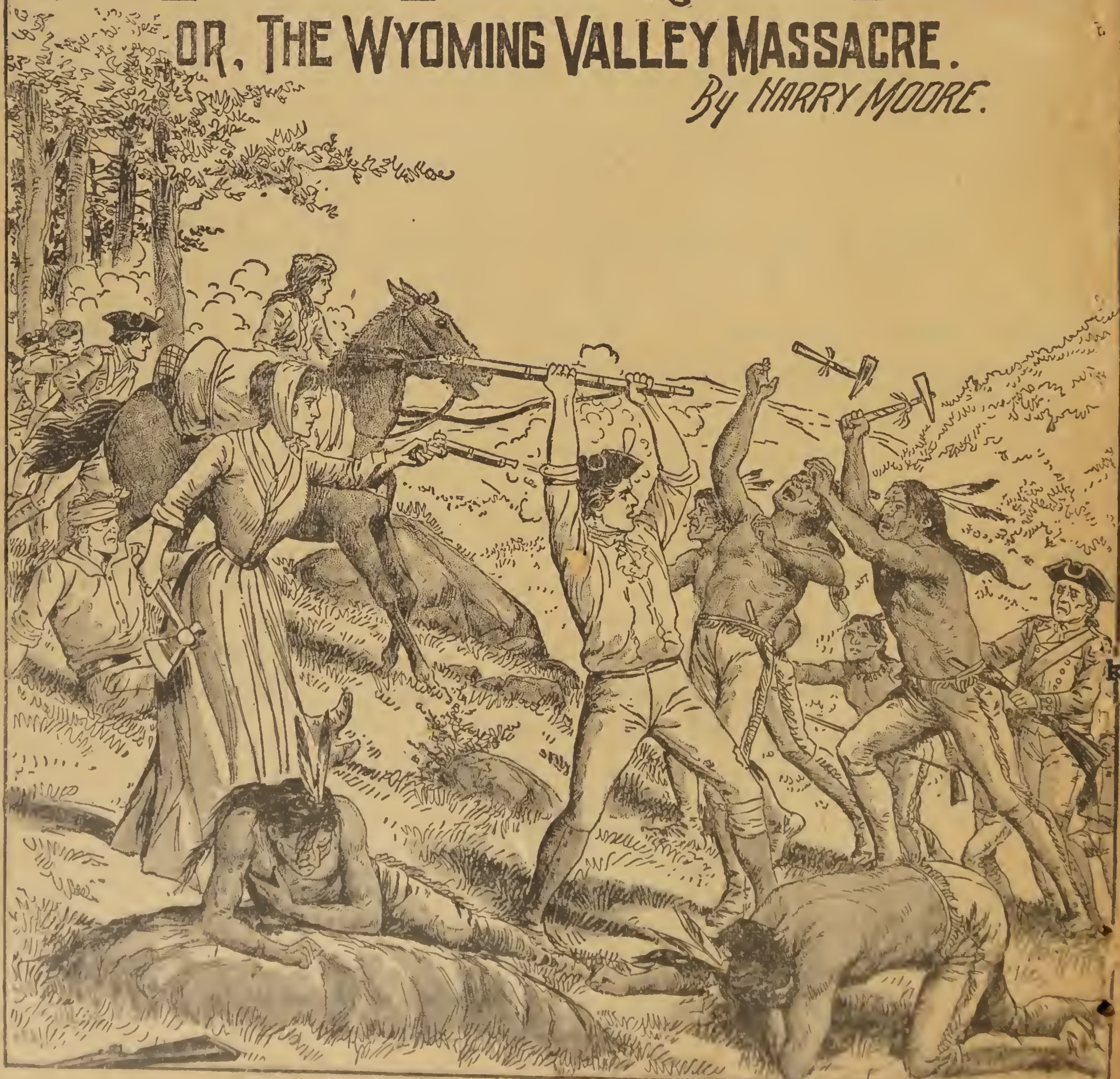
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